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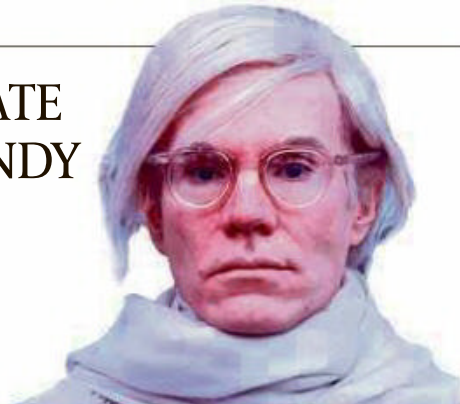
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THE WEEK

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THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

The crisis hits America Can Trump rally the nation?

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Pau Buscato | Ibiza, 2015

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Is the Government doing enough?

Is Britain “finally turning a corner on the coronavirus horror”, asked the Daily Mail. A declining daily death toll and some expressions of cautious optimism among experts had led many people to hope so – until Tuesday delivered a harsh reality check. The UK death toll shot up that day by a record 381, and by a further 563 on Wednesday, taking the total to 2,352. Among the victims was a previously healthy 13-year-old boy from south London, Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab. There are now more than 29,000 confirmed cases in the country. A quarter of doctors and a fifth of nurses are reported to be sick or in isolation. New research, meanwhile, has suggested that nearly a fifth of all small and medium-sized businesses in the UK could run out of the cash they need to survive in the next four weeks. With more than 887,000 people infected globally, UN Secretary General António Guterres said the outbreak was the biggest global challenge since the Second World War, and warned that it could bring a recession “that probably has no parallel in the recent past”.

As if the situation in the UK weren't worrying enough already, said Patrick Wintour in The Guardian, many of the people leading our effort to contain Covid-19 now seem to have contracted it themselves. Last week, Boris Johnson fell sick with the virus and addressed the nation via Twitter video from quarantine. Next to fall was the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, followed by Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty and the PM's chief strategist, Dominic Cummings. This is what comes of ignoring the Government's own advice on social distancing, said Tom Peck on The Independent. Junior health minister Nadine Dorries tested positive for the coronavirus more than three weeks ago. Yet despite her illness – and that of the coronavirus expert Dr Neil Ferguson, who warned that “there is a lot of Covid-19 in Westminster” – the PM and other senior figures carried on as if they were immune to the virus.

Johnson has “botched” his response to Covid-19 from the start, said Rob Merrick in the same paper. His failure reflects a lack of official preparedness that stretches back for years. After a three-day exercise in 2016 into a theoretical flu pandemic, the then-chief medical officer Sally Davies warned that the country wouldn't have enough ventilators in hospitals



The PM addressing a Cobra meeting from quarantine

to cope with such a crisis. Yet nothing was done. It wasn't until mid-March that the Government issued an urgent call for companies to help produce more ventilators, said The Observer. Having done so, it then apparently failed to respond to some offers of help. For reasons that remain unclear, it also failed to take part in a joint procurement scheme with Brussels for extra ventilators. The Government's procurement of personal protective equipment for medical staff, and of vital virus test kits has been equally chaotic and slow (see opposite).

The testing regime has been patently inadequate, said Leo McKinstry in The Sun, but a lot of the flak aimed at ministers – much of it from “hindsight merchants and political axe-grinders who could not even have spelt epidemiology a month ago” – is unfair. Of course we were unprepared for this crisis; so was almost every other country outside Asia, “which at least had the rehearsal of the Sars epidemic”. We're making up for lost time now, said Patrick O'Flynn in the Daily Express. Private companies are pitching in: Dyson and Gtech have joined the race to produce more ventilators, and the Mercedes F1 team has co-developed

“A quarter of doctors and a fifth of nurses are reported to be sick or in isolation”

a non-invasive breathing aid that can keep patients out of intensive care. Thousands of retired NHS staff are heading back to the front line, joined

by an army of volunteers. Along with the mass redeployment of NHS staff, said The Economist, there has been a rapid drive to make tens of thousands of new hospital beds available. As one impressed NHS observer puts it: “Stuff that normally takes a couple of years has been done in 72 hours.”

Voters are generally rallying behind the Government, said Andrew Rawnsley in The Observer. Johnson is enjoying a “coronavirus popularity dividend”, as indeed are most national leaders. “Emmanuel Macron has become better regarded among the French. Germans are more appreciative of Angela Merkel.” Even Giuseppe Conte, the leader of Italy's embattled government, has seen his popularity rise. But this boost won't last forever. Just ask Gordon Brown, who likewise enjoyed a jump in his approval ratings in the initial phases of the financial crisis, only to see it quickly dissipate. “There will one day be a great reckoning about the coronavirus, its origins, its spread and how it was tackled.” Johnson will have plenty of questions to answer then.

It wasn't all bad

The “looked after” children and offspring of key workers still attending school may not be thrilled to be there – but many of them will at least be eating well. Chefs from The Dorchester and the Ottolenghi chain are among those who have volunteered to cook free meals for schools during the lockdown; they are also cooking lunches for deprived children at home, who might not otherwise get a hot meal. The enterprise started in London but there are plans to expand it.

The sound of applause rang around the nation last Thursday evening as people stood outside their front doors and leant out of windows to show their appreciation for NHS staff working around the clock, and risking their lives, to battle the coronavirus. In the capital, the London Eye, the Shard and Wembley Stadium were lit up in NHS blue at 8pm as part of the “clap for carers” initiative, while the words “Thank you NHS” were painted over a bridge on the M25. The event was launched by Annemarie Plas, a yoga teacher in London, and inspired by similar ones all over the world.



Officials in Switzerland beamed the colours of the Italian flag onto the side of the Matterhorn this week, as a gesture of solidarity to their neighbours, and to thank them for their efforts to contain the coronavirus. More locally, footballers from Norwich City have been making regular calls to the club's older fans, to check they are coping in isolation; and in Birmingham, householders have been sticking notes onto their waste bins and in front windows, expressing their gratitude to local waste collectors.

The US in crisis

What a “spectacular failure of leadership”, said Dana Milbank in The Washington Post. In January, US president Donald Trump said Covid-19 was “totally under control”. The next month, as the virus swept the world, he predicted it would soon disappear – “like a miracle” – and, just last week, he said he hoped the US would be “open by Easter”. This week, as the country’s death toll passed 4,000 – more than China’s official toll, or the number who perished on 9/11 – Trump finally admitted that won’t be possible. Instead, he said that his administration would have done a “very good job” if it kept the death toll below 200,000. As of Wednesday, the US had 190,000 cases (more than China and Italy combined).



Trump: playing politics with supplies?

If you want to understand the scale of this fiasco, compare the US with South Korea, said Ed Pilkington in The Guardian. Both countries recorded their first Covid-19 cases on 20 January. But whereas Seoul responded by methodically identifying and testing carriers, the US “became mired in chaos and confusion”. Just over two months later, South Korea has “more or less won” its battle with the virus, limiting deaths to 165. The US, meanwhile, is now the centre of the pandemic: about 245 million people in 32 states are on lockdown, and its president has warned that 240,000 people could die.

Some 76,000 cases – and 1,714 deaths – have now been recorded in the state of New York alone. Yet, as a field hospital opened in Central Park and a US navy hospital ship docked in New York City, Trump was playing politics with medical supplies, said the FT. While Republican swing

states like Florida are getting the resources they ask for from federal government, Democratic strongholds like New York are left to fight eBay-style bidding wars to secure scarce equipment such as ventilators from the private sector.

Meanwhile “the economy is in free fall”, said Matthew A. Baum in the LA Times. Some 3.3 million people registered for jobless benefits in one week and, even after a \$2trn stimulus passed last week, the Federal Reserve predicted unemployment could reach 32%. Amazingly, though, Trump’s approval ratings are going up: a recent Gallup poll found 60% think he’s handling the crisis well, and 49% say he’s doing a good job overall. Perhaps it’s the

“rally-round-the-flag” effect which often accompanies a crisis. Nonsense, said Mike Huckabee in the Washington Examiner – it’s because he’s doing a good job. Trump should be lauded for his “fundamentally American” strategy of keeping the country open as long as possible while delegating decisions in individual states to governors. History will judge him kindly.

The illusion that America was ready for such a crisis has been well and truly “shattered”, said Ed Yong in The Atlantic. It may have ranked first in the Global Health Security Index’s league of “pandemic preparedness”, but America has fewer acute-care hospital beds per capita than Italy, poorly funded public health agencies and a dearth of scientific expertise in the White House. Its response to Covid-19 – “rudderless, blindsided, lethargic” – is worse than experts could ever have feared. But all is not lost, said Bill Gates in The Washington Post. With more testing, a lockdown in all 50 states, and a “data-based approach” to finding treatments and a vaccine, we can still “save lives and get the country back to work”.

Testing times

More than two weeks have passed since the World Health Organisation issued its “simple message for all countries: test, test, test. Test every suspected case.” And so far, the UK’s response has been too slow, said Anthony Costello, a former WHO director, in The Daily Telegraph. Germany has been conducting 120,000 tests a week for the past month, and its Covid-19 death rate is eight per million people. South Korea had managed more than 410,000 tests by 31 March, and has limited its death rate to three per million. Here in the UK, however, we tested an average of just 7,300 people a day last week, and our death rate is currently at 21 per million – “and rising rapidly”.

Without mass testing, the UK is fighting blind, said Ben Spencer in the Daily Mail. At the heart of the problem is a lack of capacity: officials say they can only test so many people – currently limited to the very ill and some NHS staff. Although the Government’s

testing programme was expanded to an additional 40 labs in NHS hospitals last month, it has still not been enough. Another issue is lack of equipment – with every country now ramping up testing, demand far outstrips supply. According to Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove, there is also a shortage of the chemical “reagents” needed for testing, said Rowena Mason in The Guardian – something the Chemical Industries Association this week denied. All these issues must urgently be addressed if we are to reach the Department of Health target of 25,000 tests a day by mid-April.

Scientists are working on two different Covid-19 tests, said Robin McKie in The Observer – a polymerase chain reaction swab test to identify those who currently have the virus; and an antibody test to identify those who have been infected but who should now be immune. The Government has bought 3.5 million antibody tests, but they are still being checked to ensure they work. Both are needed if society is to return to normality, said The Sun. “Wide-spread testing is the only way out of the coronavirus mess.”

THE WEEK

Over the past three weeks, this magazine has had a crash course in what our HR people call “agile working”. Our office in Queensway, London, has been closed down and our small editorial team has

been scattered to the four winds, then magically reconstituted in box rooms, bedrooms, kitchens and other improvised spaces in crowded family homes, quarantined flatshares, travel taverns and light industrial estates across the country – from Sheffield to Littlehampton, Essex to Monmouth. Everything is done via virtual wizardry. All the sections of the magazine devoted to going out – films, restaurants, galleries, travel – have had to take a new form for the locked-down world. This isn’t a plea for sympathy: we are painfully aware that everyone in Britain (indeed, more than a fifth of the world’s population) has seen this kind of disruption, or much worse. But we are asking for patience.

Inevitably, some aspects of The Week’s operation have been hampered. Our customer support team have had to temporarily close their phone lines. Staff are still working, but queries are being dealt with by email at subscriptions@theweek.co.uk. Renewing subscriptions, or checking account details, can also be done at managemymags.co.uk. We would encourage all subscribers to update their details on that site, as we aim to provide access to a digital edition in the event that we experience significant disruption to printing or deliveries. And if there’s anything we could do better, please contact editorial to let us know.

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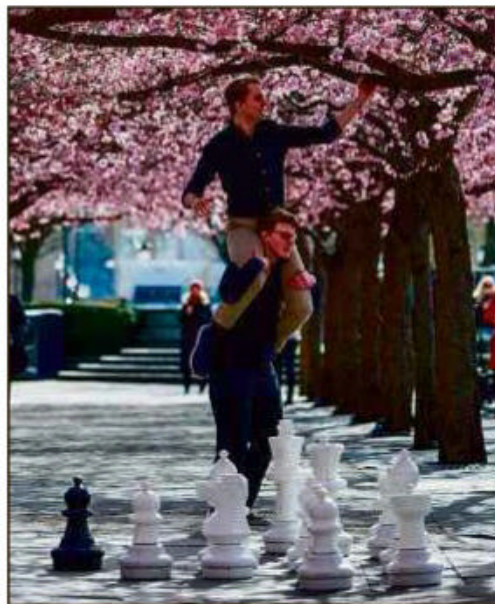
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Controversy of the week

Maths, life and death

Last month, Imperial College London “released one of the most consequential academic papers in recent history”, said Fraser Nelson in *The Daily Telegraph*. In it, researchers reported that their mathematical modelling had predicted that the UK’s existing strategy would fail to contain the outbreak, resulting in up to 260,000 deaths. It jolted Boris Johnson into imposing the lockdown he had resisted. But a few days later, a group from Oxford University posited another theory, using a different model: that the disease could have already infected up to 68% of the British population. If so, the death rate is tiny, and “herd immunity” might have already been acquired. The Oxford study “has its (vociferous) critics”, but it points to a real dilemma. Looking around the world, the picture is very unclear. “Is this virus a terrifying killer or a manageable risk?”



Stockholm, Sweden: not on lockdown

Sweden appears to believe it is the latter, said Freddie Sayers on *UnHerd*. There, schools, bars and restaurants are still open. Gatherings of up to 50 people are allowed. This policy is being led by the state epidemiologist Anders Tegnell, and is based on detailed region-by-region modelling, which predicts that Sweden’s large geographical spread, and its very low number of multigenerational households, will protect it from serious harm. Tegnell is highly dubious about the Imperial study. “It’s not a peer-reviewed paper,” he says. “It might be right, but it might also be terribly wrong.” No modelling is perfect, said Tom Whipple in *The Times*. Many virologists have privately expressed concern that so much of UK policy appears “to hinge on one model”. But that doesn’t mean we are free to pick “Team Oxford, or Team Imperial”. As they say in the field: “All models are wrong, just some are more wrong than others.” And many experts are scathing about the Oxford study. The idea that 68% of us could have already been infected rests on an improbable assumption, said Matt Reynolds in *Wired*: that just one in every 1,000 people infected needs to be hospitalised. This figure just doesn’t match the real-world data from, say, Italy.

Even so, the Oxford study has been misinterpreted, said Therese Raphael on *Bloomberg*. It was designed to ask how far Covid-19 had spread. Its main conclusion, according to its leader, Sunetra Gupta, was that only through testing for antibodies can we be certain about rates of infection. In these difficult times, we look to scientists to assuage our uncertainty. “Are we on the upward slope of a death march or seeing the tip of an iceberg of people who are infected but benign?” Will it be over by June, or in six months? The answer “lies somewhere within a range of possibilities”; this isn’t very reassuring, but it’s the best the scientists can offer. Our assessments are changing daily on the basis of hard evidence coming out of China, South Korea, Italy, Spain and the US. But in the meantime, it’s all too clear what we need to do: “isolate, test, trace, hope”.

Airlift for Britons abroad

A £75m plan to repatriate the 300,000 Britons stranded abroad owing to Covid-19 lockdowns was announced this week. Aimed at tourists, and not expats, it will prioritise vulnerable people, and involve a mix of scheduled and chartered flights. Passengers have been told to use commercial flights if they are in a country where flights are still taking off, and the Government has urged airlines to help people whose flights were cancelled to get home at “little to no extra cost”. Britons were advised to make themselves known to embassies and high commissions, and await further details. Passengers will be expected to pay for their flights, but loans to cover the cost will be made available to them.

Plan for rough sleepers

Last week, the Government told councils in England that they must house all rough sleepers, and those in hostels and night shelters, within 72 hours, to stop the spread of the coronavirus. However, according to *The Guardian*, thousands of people remained un-housed at the end of that period. Local authorities have asked for more funding. In response, ministers have pointed to an earlier announcement that £1.6bn in emergency funds will be given to councils.

Spirit of the age

The days when people gave their pets distinctively animal names – whether Rex, Rover, Tiddles, Pompom or Puss – appear to be over. Nine out of ten of the most popular names given to puppies and kittens in 2019 (among them Poppy, Molly, Alfie and Max) also appeared in the top 100 names for babies.

Bosses are reportedly panic-buying office surveillance software so that they can keep an eye on their employees now working from home. Producers of the software, which can monitor online activity and keystrokes, and even take screenshots, have reported a surge in demand since it became clear that a lockdown was coming. One firm, ActivTrak, says its software orders have tripled in a few weeks.

Good week for:

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, who managed to leave Canada and move into a rented home in California before the borders closed. Having officially stepped down as working royals on 31 March, they are reportedly planning to start a new life in or near Los Angeles, in order to be close to Meghan’s mother.

Shoppers, after leading supermarkets, including Waitrose, Morrisons and Aldi, announced that they were relaxing the restrictions they’d imposed to prevent stockpiling. Meanwhile, Tesco said it was increasing its capacity to home-deliver shopping, and M&S said it was introducing an “essentials” hamper.

A retired nurse from Suffolk, who became the oldest person known to have survived the coronavirus in Britain. Identified only as Joy, the 94-year-old credited the “brilliant” staff at James Paget hospital in Great Yarmouth for her recovery.

Bad week for:

Carluccio’s, which became the latest casualty of the lockdown. The Italian restaurant chain, which had been struggling for some time, went into administration, putting 2,000 jobs at risk.

Edinburgh, with the cancellation of the Fringe and International festivals, which had been scheduled for August. The city’s Art Festival and International Book Festival have also been cancelled.

Tennis lovers, after Wimbledon, and the entire grass-court season, was called off, following emergency meetings held this week. In France, organisers of the Tour de France were looking into whether the race could be held “behind closed doors” this summer – with no spectators lining the route.

Poll watch

92% of British voters say they support the country’s current lockdown measures.

57% think the measures should go even further, and **33%** think there should be a ban placed on all public transport.

Opinium/The Observer

Boris Johnson’s net favourability rating (those who say they have a positive opinion of him, minus those who have a negative opinion) rose from -7 to +20 during March. The Chancellor Rishi Sunak’s rating rose from -7 to +49. *YouGov/The Independent*

84% of Britons say they are “mostly” following official advice to stay at home. **55%** are working from home when they would not ordinarily be; **24%** are required to go to work. *Savanta/The Daily Telegraph*



Penistone Hill, West Yorkshire

Toads saved: Large numbers of migrating toads may have had their lives saved, as a result of the cancellation of a series of cross-country running races on Penistone Hill, near Bradford. According to the head of the Riddlesden Toad Patrol conservation group, “literally hundreds” of amphibians have been trampled in previous years by fell runners competing in the evening “bunny runs”, which take place around Easter, close to a pond where the toads mate. Wharfedale Harriers,

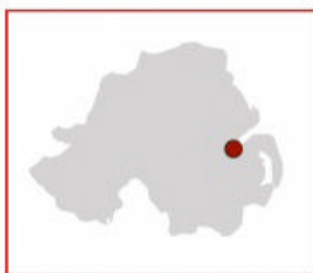
which organises the runs, said it wasn’t aware of tramlings, and had in any case planned to reroute the runs.

Birmingham

Critical care: Birmingham’s vast National Exhibition Centre is being hastily converted into the UK’s largest hospital, with 5,000 beds. A smaller facility, with 1,000 beds, is being built at the Manchester Central Convention Complex. Meanwhile, the Nightingale field hospital at London’s ExCel Centre was close to completion this week. An unnamed contract worker told The Times that working on the construction project had made him “emotional” at times. “I’ve never been involved in anything like this before, not even close,” he said. “You’ve got everyone from electricians, builders, soldiers, firefighters and police all getting involved. It’s hard work and long hours, but you’ve got a sense of purpose, like it isn’t just a job but something important.”

Belfast

Extraordinary measures: The Northern Ireland Executive has brought in sweeping new powers to combat the spread of Covid-19. Under regulations which came into force last weekend, those who break social distancing laws could be hit by fines of up to £5,000. The maximum penalty will be reserved for businesses that fail to comply with the lockdown regulations – but individuals could face fines of £960 for leaving their homes without a good excuse. “These are extraordinary powers for any government to have to introduce, but we are living in extraordinary times,” said First Minister Arlene Foster.

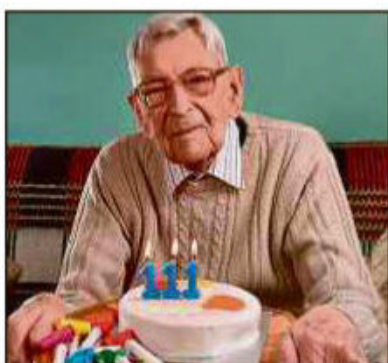


Cardiff

Shamed: Police in Cardiff have rebuked Stephen Kinnock, MP for Aberavon, for visiting his father, ex-Labour leader Neil Kinnock, on his 78th birthday. Kinnock Jr had tweeted a photo of himself sitting at a safe distance from his parents, outside their house in London. South Wales Police replied to the post, saying his trip had not been “essential”. Elsewhere, police officers have been accused of over-zealousness for threatening to fine a London baker for “criminal damage” after she sprayed social-distancing markers in chalk outside her shop; and for adding black dye to Derbyshire’s “Blue Lagoon” to make it less appealing. There have also been reports of officials wrongly telling corner shops that they shouldn’t be selling “non-essentials” like Easter Eggs.

Alton, Hampshire

Celebrations cancelled: The world’s oldest man was forced to call off his 112th birthday party last Sunday because of the coronavirus outbreak. Instead, Bob Weighton – who took up his title in February – stayed by himself at his home in Alton, Hampshire, and spoke to some of his three children, ten grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren on the phone. He admitted to feeling “a bit frustrated” – but added that having lived through two World Wars, “having your plans interrupted... is not really new to me”.



Hull, East Yorkshire

Rail services halted: Hull Trains has become the first UK rail operator to suspend all services in response to Covid-19. The company, part of FirstGroup, said it had been forced to cancel its trains between Hull/Beverley and London King’s Cross indefinitely after passenger numbers dwindled following the introduction of restrictions on non-essential travel. With rail routes around the country being stripped back, the Department for Transport last week effectively nationalised rail franchises in England to prevent them from collapsing: it allowed them to transfer “all revenue and cost risk” to the Government and be paid a small fee in return, to keep services running. However, Hull Trains, which employs around 130 staff, is not a franchise owner, but one of three “open access” operators – which means it takes the full commercial risk of its business and does not qualify for additional support.



Kent

Slim pickings: Millions of spears of asparagus may be left to rot in fields as a result of the lockdown, farmers have warned. Harvested from April to June, asparagus will be one of the first of this year’s crops to need picking. But most of the 5,000 or so pickers who normally do this job come from Bulgaria and Romania, and cannot now reach the UK. “People just don’t understand how dependent we are on casual overseas labour for producing fresh food,” said Jack Ward, of the British Growers Association. “About 90% are from overseas and most from eastern Europe.” The next big problem will be strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries. All will need harvesting from May, a seasonal industry that brings at least 27,000 foreign workers to the UK.

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Prague

Mandatory masks: The Czech government has made the wearing of face masks mandatory in public – and has called on the public to make their own at home from cotton, to avoid a shortage of the specialist surgical masks worn by medical workers. Although the WHO advises that people coming into contact with Covid-19 patients wear masks, the benefits of wider social use are disputed. Only two other European countries (Slovakia and Bosnia) have decreed that masks should be worn at all times in public, but Austria this week ordered its citizens to wear them when visiting the few shops that remain open. The government said free masks would be distributed at supermarkets. Austria's lockdown measures are among the strictest in Europe. By contrast, in Sweden, cafés and restaurants were still open this week, along with most schools. Many people were still going to work, and gatherings of up to 50 were still permitted.

Paris

City dwellers flee: Tensions have been growing in France – and across Europe – about wealthy urbanites retreating to their country homes, putting a strain on local infrastructure and spreading the virus to rural areas. There are 3.4 million second homes in France, far more than in neighbouring countries. Before the lockdown was imposed, Brittany had such an influx of city-dwellers, three communes were obliged to ask residents to restrict their water use; and on the island of Île de Noirmoutier, where the population has doubled, cases of Covid-19 have surged. In Belgium, people are now banned from visiting their country homes. In Norway, tens of thousands who'd fled to their mountain cabins were ordered to return to the cities. And there were reports that a lockdown imposed in Greece last week might be tightened, to stop people visiting their families in the countryside over Easter.

Madrid

Infections rise again: Hopes that the infection rate in Spain might be plateauing were undermined early this week, when 9,000 new infections were recorded in 24 hours, and 864 deaths were recorded on Tuesday. As of Wednesday, the total number of infections stood at 102,136, with 9,053 deaths. However, health officials insisted that they remained optimistic that the infection rate would continue to trend generally downward as the country's strict lockdown began to take effect. In both Spain and Italy, there are fears that populations living under lockdown are growing restive, however: there were angry scenes in Bilbao this week, after police patrolling the lockdown were accused of beating a young man they'd stopped to question. And in the south of Italy, officials are concerned that organised crime gangs will step in to fill the gap created by collapsing services.



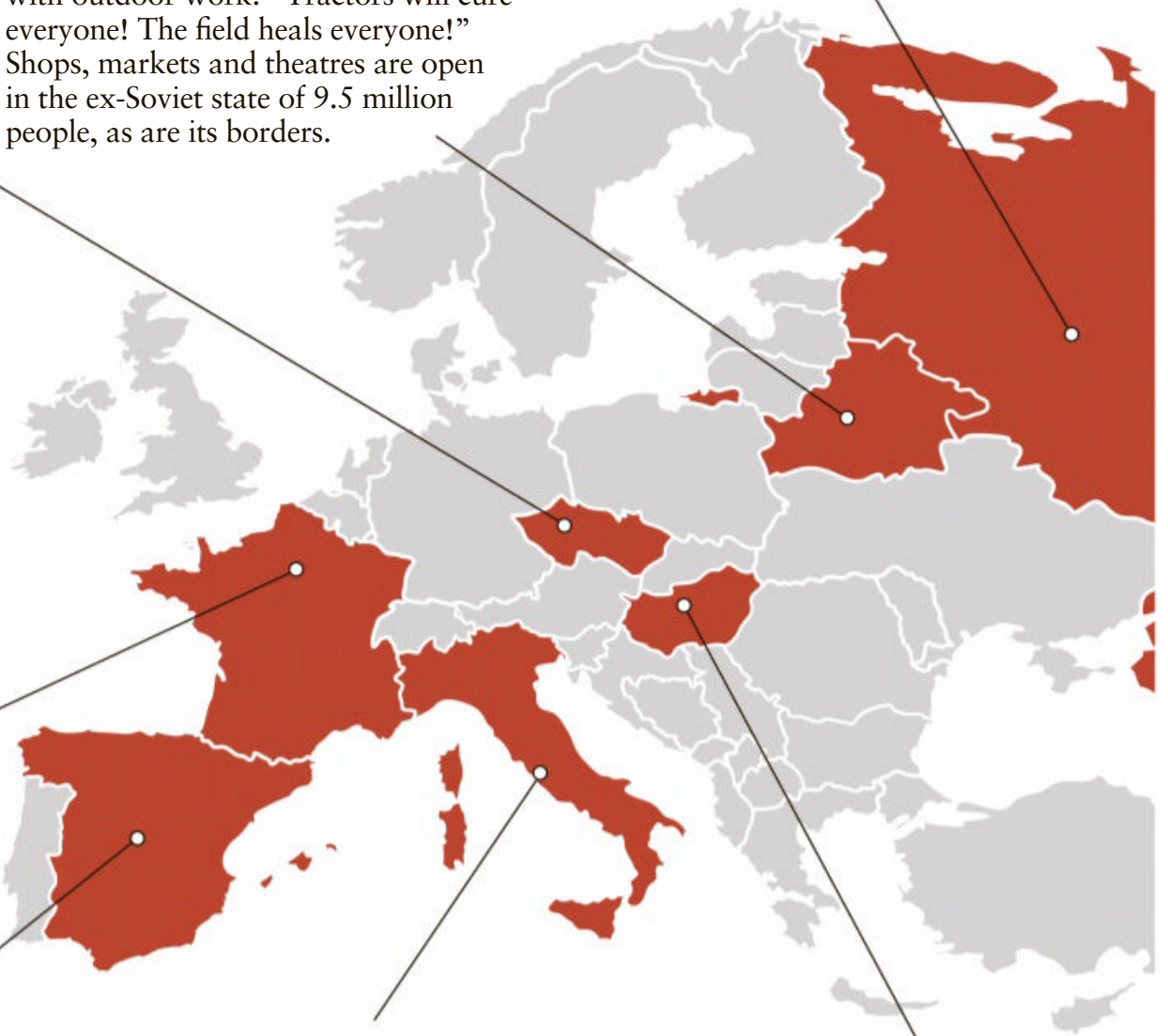
Minsk

Vodka and tractors: President Lukashenko, the Belarusian leader often described as Europe's last dictator, has mocked what he called the “panic” measures introduced by other countries.

He insists there is “no virus” in Belarus, and has urged his countrymen to keep healthy by drinking vodka, going to saunas and taking exercise. Sport is the “best anti-virus remedy”, he said, as he played in an ice hockey match on Saturday – along with outdoor work. “Tractors will cure everyone! The field heals everyone!” Shops, markets and theatres are open in the ex-Soviet state of 9.5 million people, as are its borders.

Moscow

Russian lockdown: In a sharp reversal of Russia's official stance on the coronavirus, Moscow was put into total lockdown on Monday. The capital's 12 million residents are now only allowed to leave their homes to get food and medicine. If they have a dog, they can walk it – provided they remain within 100 metres of their front doors. Additionally, President Putin – who just a week earlier was insisting that Russia had only a few hundred cases and had the virus under control – announced that the referendum that would allow him to remain in power until 2036 was being postponed because of the pandemic. On Tuesday, 500 new cases were confirmed, bringing the total to 2,777.



Rome

Lockdown extended: Italy's government has extended the country's coronavirus lockdown. According to media reports, the prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, is now hoping to begin easing restrictions in mid-April. The national lockdown, which was imposed on 9 March, had been due to end on Friday. Italy's death toll climbed by 812 to 11,591 on Monday, reversing two days of declines in the daily rate. However, on Monday and Tuesday only around 4,050 new cases were recorded – the lowest numbers for two weeks. By midweek, Italy had confirmed around 105,700 cases in total.

Budapest

Rule by decree: Hungary's parliament has voted to allow the country's “strongman” prime minister, Viktor Orbán, to rule by decree indefinitely, so that he can tackle the coronavirus crisis as he sees fit. There is no time limit to his new emergency powers, and the law introducing them includes a new criminal offence – punishable by five years in prison – of spreading misinformation that hinders the government's response to the pandemic. There have been debates in many countries about the balance between individual liberties and collective action to tackle the pandemic, but in Hungary, Orbán and his Fidesz party have been accused of steadily eroding democratic norms and stifling independent media for years. Orbán's critics fear he will seek to retain the emergency powers well beyond the crisis, and that the new law on misinformation will be used to further silence dissent.

**Washington DC**

Democrats' fears: The Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo (pictured), has publicly quashed speculation that he could be drafted in as a last-minute Democrat candidate for the presidency. Cuomo's daily press briefings, showing a calm authority and focused grip on the detail, have impressed many Americans. By contrast, the Democrats' presumptive candidate, Joe Biden, has failed to remain in the public eye at this time, raising fears in the party that he would struggle to

defeat President Trump, whose approval ratings, like those of many national leaders, have risen during the crisis.

Separately, Democrats have called for reforms – such as an expansion of postal voting, same-day registration and early voting – to ensure this autumn's presidential election can go ahead safely, as there has been talk of Trump possibly using the emergency as a reason to delay the election if his poll ratings are not looking promising (*see page 18*).

Trump has categorically kicked back against the proposed reforms, arguing that they'd disadvantage his party. The proposed measures were "crazy", he said in a TV interview. "They had things, levels of voting that if you ever agreed to it, you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again."

New Orleans, Louisiana

Hot spot: New Orleans has emerged as one of the US's most troubling virus hotspots. The first known case of Covid-19 in the state of Louisiana occurred on 9 March, and the number now stands at 5,237. According to one study, in the two weeks after the first case was diagnosed, New Orleans had the fastest growth rate for the disease recorded anywhere in the world. This has been attributed to its Mardi Gras festivities, which attracted 1.4 million tourists – though no link has been definitively established. This week, the authorities were scrambling to source the 13,000 ventilators they expect to need, and setting up a field hospital in the convention centre in which 25,000 people took refuge from Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Caracas

Maduro targeted: The Venezuelan president, Nicolás Maduro, has been classified as a "narco-terrorist" by the US authorities and indicted by a US court – along with a number of his senior officials – on charges including money laundering and drug trafficking. He is accused of conspiring with a Farc splinter group from Colombia to "flood the United States with cocaine". In a carrot and stick approach, Washington then offered to lift tough sanctions on Venezuela if Maduro and his rival, Juan Guaidó, agreed to stand aside to allow the formation of an interim government made up of their supporters. Analysts say the hope is that, with the economic crisis in Venezuela further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, Maduro will feel he has no option but to concede.

**Xingu, Brazil**

Self-isolation: Indigenous groups across South America are blockading their villages, and retreating into their traditional forest and mountain homes, in an effort to avoid the Covid-19 pandemic, reports The Guardian. Infectious diseases such as measles, smallpox and flu viruses have a long record of wreaking havoc among such communities, starting with the European conquest of the Americas. "Coronavirus could wipe us out," warned Ianucula

Kaiabi, an indigenous leader in Brazil's Xingu National Park, where roads into tribal reserves have been sealed off. The territory in the southern Amazon is almost the size of Belgium, and home to 6,000 people from 16 tribes. Similar actions have been taken by indigenous groups in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador.

Detroit, Michigan

Brewing storm: Medical experts in Detroit have warned that the city is set to become America's next major hotspot for Covid-19, and that it may be facing a more intense crisis than that currently consuming New York. "The high rates of social disadvantage and higher co-morbidities make the city of Detroit more vulnerable to Covid-19," said Dr Teena Chopra, a professor of infectious diseases. A third of Detroit's residents are classed as living in poverty, and the city is home to large numbers of people with underlying risk factors, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension and congestive heart failure, which will make them more vulnerable to the infection. Last week, Michigan's governor Gretchen Whitmer – who has publicly challenged President Trump over the federal government's uncertain response to the emergency – issued a stay-at-home order in place until 13 April.

**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

Governors defiant: The governors of 26 of Brazil's 27 states have attacked Jair Bolsonaro, the far-right president, over his reckless handling of the coronavirus crisis, and told him they will ignore his calls for a scaling back of the nationwide lockdown. In recent weeks, Bolsonaro has created a political crisis by publicly flouting his own government's rules on physical distancing. Last week, he urged people to return to work and schools in defiance of his own health ministry's instructions. According to opinion polls, almost half of Brazilians want Bolsonaro to be impeached. There have been nightly pot-banging protests in major cities, and in Rio, criminal gangs have imposed their own strict curfews on the city's overcrowded favelas.

Damascus

First known fatalities: Syria's health ministry confirmed the country's first known fatalities from Covid-19 this week, amid warnings from doctors and aid agencies that the virus could create a new humanitarian catastrophe in the war-ravaged country. UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock has said that the known cases represent a fraction of the total, and that Syria's health system is too weak to assess the virus, or respond to it. The Assad government has imposed a night-time curfew, restricted travel between provinces, shut schools and colleges, and banned gatherings. But there remain serious concerns for the 6.2 million people who are internally displaced in Syria, many of whom are living in overcrowded, insanitary conditions, with little or no access to healthcare.

Tehran

Methanol deaths: Hundreds of people have died across Iran as a result of drinking toxic methanol, in the misguided belief that alcohol is a cure for Covid-19. A doctor working for the health ministry put the death toll at 480; a further 2,850 people have been taken ill. Some children who'd been given it by their parents are reported to be among the casualties. In Iran, where alcohol is banned, producers of methanol – an industrial alcohol used in solvents and antifreeze – must colour the liquid to distinguish it from ethanol, the alcohol used in drinks. However, bootleggers still use it, and add bleach to mask the colour. Rumours that alcohol cures the virus may have originated in reports about a British schoolteacher in Wuhan, who claimed in February to have got through an infection by drinking hot toddies.



New Delhi

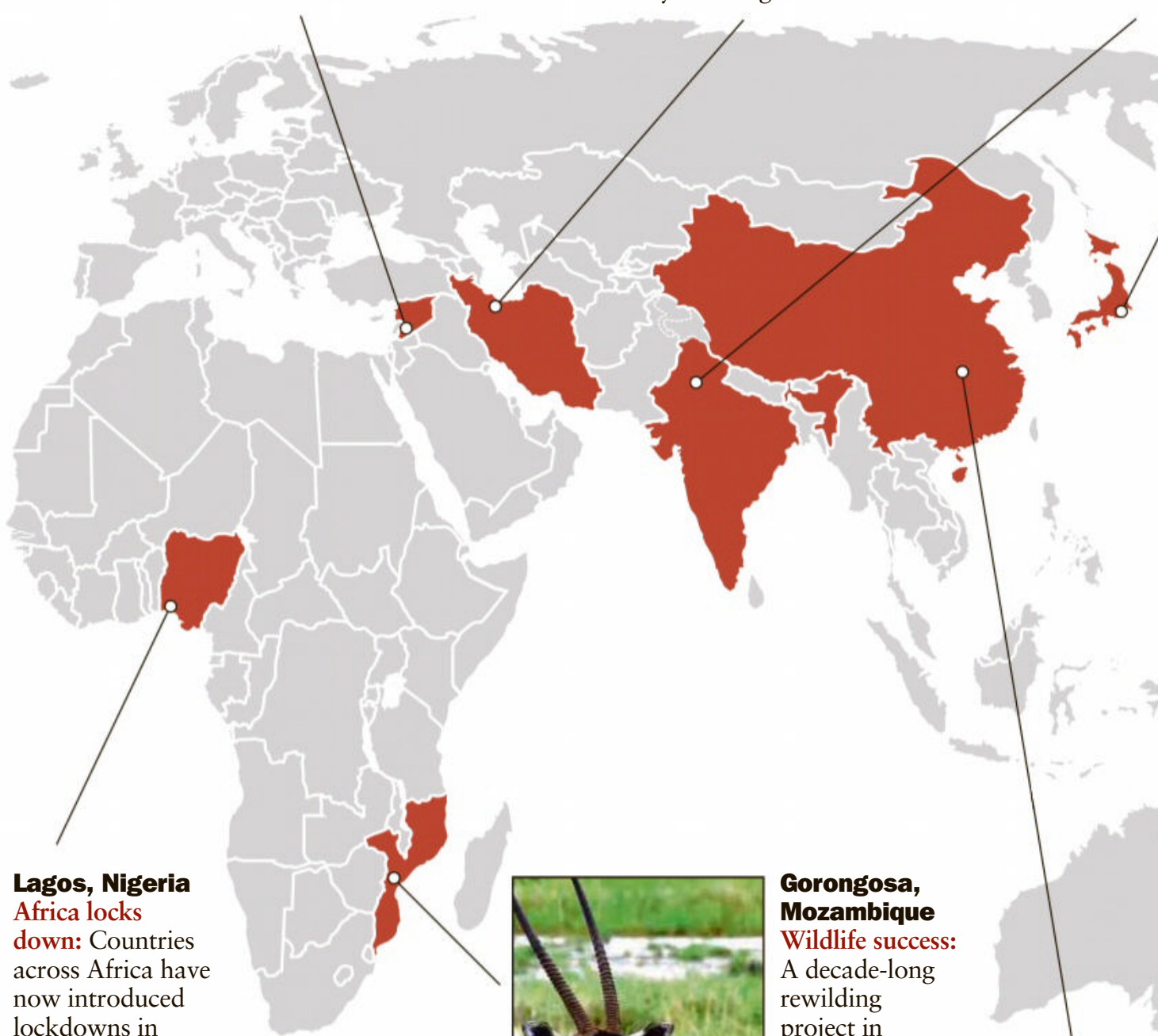
Indian exodus:

The Indian government's imposition of a total lockdown last week has prompted a chaotic exodus from its cities. Around 80% of India's 470 million workers

are employed informally, lacking contracts and scraping a living in the fields, factories and streets. Left with no means of subsistence, millions have been heading to their home states, many of them on foot. It may represent their best hope of surviving the emergency, but it risks spreading the disease to rural areas.

Tokyo

Rapid escalation: Japan has seen an ominous acceleration in Covid-19 cases over the past ten days, following a lengthy period in which increases had been relatively small and linear. The rapid rise has raised fears in particular for Tokyo, a densely populated city of 14 million people. Japan has done far less testing, and introduced far less stringent shutdowns, than neighbouring South Korea and Taiwan, and its government is now under growing pressure to adopt a more assertive approach.



Lagos, Nigeria

Africa locks down:

Countries across Africa have now introduced lockdowns in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Nigeria's commercial hub Lagos (Africa's most populous city) began a 14-day lockdown on Monday night, with people confined to their homes and businesses ordered to close. In South Africa, where President Ramaphosa has won plaudits for his surefooted response to the crisis, a 21-day lockdown began last Friday. In Kenya, police used tear gas to disperse crowds of commuters last week before the start of a nationwide dusk-to-dawn curfew. Uganda is also locked down, and the president of Botswana – which had four confirmed cases this week – has declared a state of emergency.



Gorongosa, Mozambique

Wildlife success:

A decade-long rewilding project in Mozambique's Gorongosa National Park has been hailed as a spectacular success – for boosting the number of animals tenfold to 100,000, and for the inadvertent discovery of a solution to Mimosa pigra infestations. The shrub has spread around the world from the Americas, sucking up vast amounts of water and wiping out indigenous plants. However, the reintroduction of antelope into the park has tamed the shrub, Princeton researchers found.

Wuhan, China

Unrest: Police officers from Hubei province clashed with police from neighbouring Jiangxi on a bridge over the Yangtze last week, after Beijing lifted the lockdown in Hubei and thousands of residents tried to leave. The clashes reflect public scepticism about officials' claims that the epidemic in Hubei has been contained. There is also suspicion that China may have understated the number of deaths. Officially, 3,187 people died in Hubei. However, residents have told foreign media that they believe the true death toll runs into tens of thousands.

Thandie Newton on #MeToo

Thandie Newton began her film career in the 1990s, at a time when sexual predators like Harvey Weinstein “reigned supreme” in the industry, says Kirsty Lang in *The Sunday Times*. When Newton was 18, for instance, she was called for an audition with a male director. “[He] asked me to sit with my legs apart; the camera was positioned where it could see up my skirt,” she recalls. “He asked me to put my leg over the arm of the chair and think about the character I was supposed to be having the dialogue with and how it felt to be made love to by this person. I was still very young and thought it must be normal.” Later, she learnt that he had kept the tape, and used it to titillate his friends after poker games at his house. It’s one of the reasons why now, at 47, she is a leading voice in the #MeToo movement, and devotes much of her time to campaigning for social change. “This business preys on young people. It’s the rape culture, the climate of silencing, that is what once destroyed me and what now fires me up.”

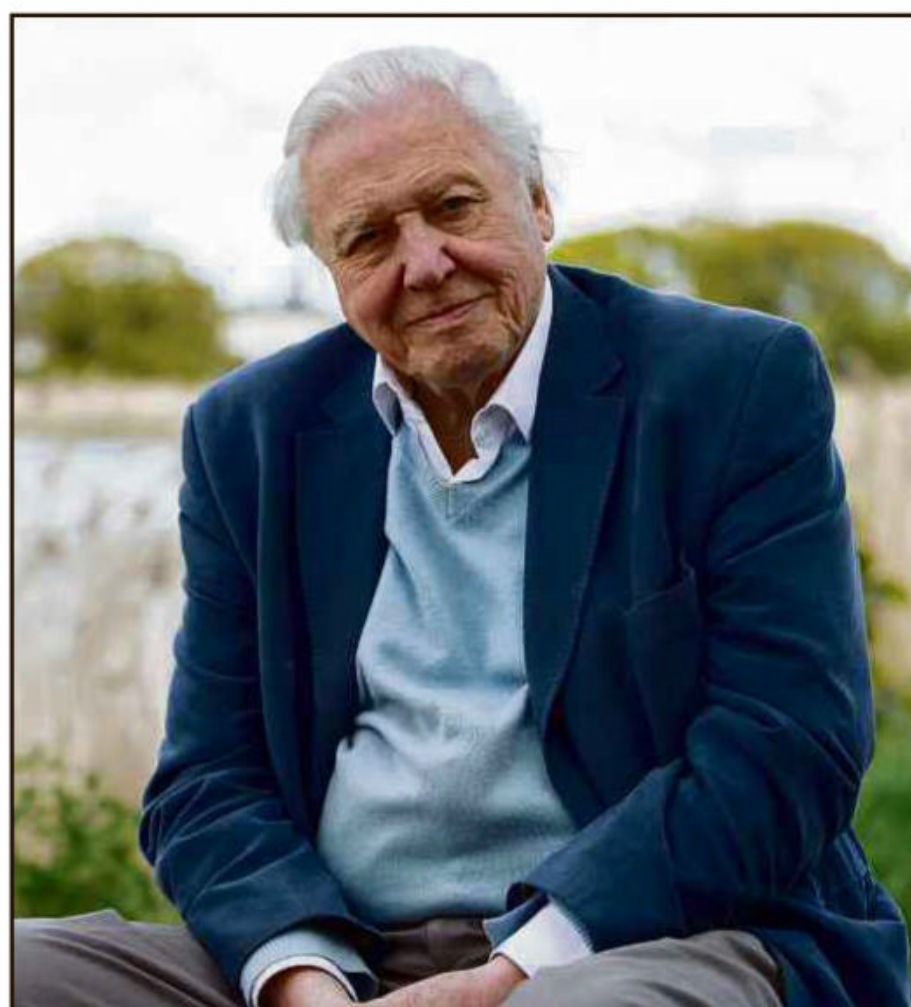
Archer and his VIP friends

Jeffrey Archer is many things: novelist, former deputy chair of the Tory party, one-time London mayoral candidate, perjurer – and almighty name-dropper. Before the coronavirus shut Britain down, he was busy planning a party to celebrate his 80th birthday. “We’re having a dinner for friends,” he told Guy Kelly in

The Daily Telegraph. “Two or three hundred, at Banqueting House.” Will any famous faces be in attendance? “You are so *vulgar*,” he barks. “I don’t know – it’s very eclectic. John Major will be on a table; the woman I most admire, [film producer] Kathy Kennedy, on another. Sajid Javid, Priti Patel, Tobias Ellwood, Kwasi Kwarteng, Nadhim Zahawi... they will be there. A small gathering of misfits who’ve made it.”

Angela Rippon’s endurance

Angela Rippon has graced our screens for 53 years – which is 25 years longer than her bosses bargained for. In 1995, the BBC’s then-director general, John Birt, took the journalist and newsreader aside at a Corporation party. “I’d just turned 50 and he said to me: ‘Angela, you’ll have to accept that you need to make way for the younger generation.’ I thought: I’ll decide when I stop, thank you very much! Well, I’m still working.” The double standards at work were all too obvious to her. “I remember thinking, ‘Have you had this conversation with Terry Wogan, with Michael Parkinson?’ Clearly he hadn’t.” Today, she told Jim White in *The Mail on Sunday*, things are mercifully different. “Imagine the director general telling someone like Katya Adler [the BBC’s Europe editor], ‘Darling, it’s time to stop.’ Not going to happen. It comes down to the individual. If you stand your ground and say ‘I’m here to stay’, then you will.”



When David Attenborough turned eight, his father gave him his first pet: not a dog, or a hamster, but a fire salamander. “They’re absolutely magical things,” he told Nick Rufford in *The Sunday Times*. The gift of this amphibian creature ignited in him the passion for nature that has been the bedrock of his career. And it worries him how few children today have the kind of formative experiences he enjoyed – cycling 15 miles to a quarry and spending the day “looking for dragonflies, grass snakes and newts”. We’re losing touch with nature. It is important to have contact with the natural world, “for people’s sanity”, he says. “Anybody will recognise that in moments of both exultation and deep sorrow that that’s where you go.” But he is acutely conscious of how much of the natural world that he took for granted has been destroyed in his own lifetime: rainforests in Borneo where he made his early films have been bulldozed to make way for plantations; some of the reefs he dived from are dead. And then there is climate change. It’s why, at 93, he is still working – and is more outspoken and political than he was as a younger man. “I belong to the generation that really created all this stuff. We had no concept that we were ruining the world, none. I suppose you can say, ‘Well, you were very insensitive – you should have realised,’ but I don’t think many people did.”

Castaway of the week

This week’s edition of Radio 4’s Desert Island Discs featured the actor and director Brian Cox

- 1* *Bridge Over Troubled Water* by Paul Simon, performed by Johnny Cash
- 2 *Saturday Night At The Movies* by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, performed by The Drifters
- 3 *The Air That I Breathe* by Albert Hammond and Mike Hazlewood, performed by k.d. lang
- 4 *Get Back* by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, performed by The Beatles
- 5 *La quête* by Joe Darion, Mitch Leigh and Jacques Brel, performed by Jacques Brel
- 6 *Both Sides Now*, written and performed by Joni Mitchell
- 7* *God Only Knows* by Brian Wilson and Tony Asher, performed by The Beach Boys
- 8 *Don’t Get Me Wrong* by Chrissie Hynde, performed by The Pretenders

Book: *In Search of the Miraculous* by Pyotr Ouspenskii

Luxury: a very good sewing kit

* Choice if allowed only one record

Viewpoint:**Spring at last**

“Imagine it was winter. That’s what I thought as I queued around Sainsbury’s car park for 30 minutes just to buy milk, as I passed a padlocked children’s playground, shuttered cafés and discarded latex gloves. Imagine it was November and we were heading down a dark tunnel into grimmer, colder days. But it’s spring – thank God! The days are chill and blue, the leaves are their palest, sweetest green and you can smell the earth awaken. We’re bathed in lemony vernal light – with a whole extra hour of it in the evenings. They can ban birthday parties, school proms, beach holidays, hot dates and lunch with old friends. But, as the artist David Hockney said, they can’t cancel spring.” *Janice Turner in The Times*

Farewell

Bob Andy, reggae singer (of Bob and Marcia duo), died 27 March, aged 75.

Jennifer Bate, organist, died 25 March, aged 75.

Mark Blum, actor best-known for *Desperately Seeking Susan*, died 26 March, aged 69.

Lucia Bosè, Italian actress, died 23 March, aged 89.

Lord Garel-Jones, Tory whip under Thatcher, died 24 March, aged 79.

Krzysztof Penderecki, avant-garde composer, died 29 March, aged 86.



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The compact convertible SUV

Official fuel consumption figures for the Volkswagen T-Cabriolet range in mpg (litres/100km): combined 52.3 (5.4) – 48.7 (5.8). Combined CO₂ emissions 123 – 132g/km.

Model shown is T-Roc Cabriolet Design with optional front fog lights and metallic paint. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures (known as WLTP). The CO₂ figures shown however, are based on a calculation designed to be equivalent to the outgoing (NEDC) test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration. For more information, please see www.volkswagen.co.uk/owners/wltp or consult your retailer. Data correct at 01/03/2020. Figures quoted are for a range of configurations (including non-UK) and are subject to change due to ongoing approvals/changes. Please consult your retailer for further information.

Sunak's fire extinguisher

The Government has written a massive blank cheque to cover the damage done by the pandemic. Can we afford it?

How dire is the economic situation?

It is unprecedentedly serious: “the fastest, deepest economic shock in history”, in the words of the economist Nouriel Roubini. During the Great Depression and the 2008 global financial crisis, it took years for unemployment, bankruptcies and credit crunches to materialise. This time, events are unfolding within weeks. Practically all economic indicators are down, and this is happening against a backdrop of already weak global growth. Economists struggle to put numbers to the calamity. Morgan Stanley has forecast that the UK economy will contract by a minimum of 5.1% this year. Goldman Sachs thinks US GDP will decline by 24% in the second quarter. Similar contractions are expected throughout Europe in the short term.



The Chancellor: a busy first month in the job

What has the UK Government promised?

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer, has already brought out the fire extinguisher four times. In his Budget on 11 March, he announced £7bn for businesses and workers. Only days later, he added £330bn of loan guarantees to prop up companies, and £20bn of grants for businesses in the most affected sectors. On 20 March, Sunak placed his biggest bet: an unprecedented blank cheque to protect jobs and businesses, including a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which will pay 80% of affected workers' wages, up to £2,500 per month. Cash-strapped businesses and individuals will also be able to defer tax payments. Although greeted positively, Sunak's package was criticised for not helping the country's five million self-employed workers; as a result, a fourth package last week added £9bn to compensate this group.

How much does that add up to?

Sunak declines to provide any figure; the job retention scheme in particular is very hard to cost. There are 33 million employees in the UK today, and it is not certain how many of these will need to be paid, and for how long. The Financial Times estimates that every million workers on the scheme will cost £3.5bn per quarter. Based on a doubling of today's unemployment rate to the 8% seen after the financial crisis, AXA Investment Managers assumes that 1.4 million additional workers will use the scheme, at a quarterly cost of £8bn. At the very least, the direct spend for all measures will amount to £60bn, says the FT; a stimulus worth about 3% of GDP, compared with 2% during the financial crisis. Add to that the much larger cost to the public purse caused by the inevitable falling tax revenues and declining growth, and the 2020-21 budget deficit could increase from a pre-corona figure of 2.4% of GDP, to 10.2%. And that's not counting new liabilities created by £330bn of loan guarantees.

What else can governments do?

The world's central banks have already acted forcefully: more than 50 around the globe have lowered interest rates in order to avoid a credit crunch that would make it even harder for companies to survive.

To avoid a deep and prolonged recession, they will use their full arsenal of interventions, some of them invented during recent crises: quantitative easing, credit easing, incentivised lending and zero or negative interest rates. In the UK, the Bank of England cut its rates twice in March, down to 0.1%, the lowest level in its 325-year history. It also relaunched a £200bn bond-buying programme to prevent liquidity shortages.

How will we pay for all this?

Through extra borrowing; no ceiling has been set on that. Britain had been on course for a budget deficit of £55bn in the next tax year; the Institute for Fiscal Studies now thinks that number will rise by at least £120bn. The Government would not usually be allowed to add

debt at this rate, but rules that limit the Exchequer's freedom can be exempted in a crisis. The only real option besides borrowing is to raise taxes, but that would lower spending power and so defeat the aim of supporting the economy. Raising finance via debt depends on financial markets wanting to lend to the Government. The UK's record-low borrowing costs show that investors are still happy to buy British government bonds. But even if financial markets were to make trouble, the Bank of England could resort to printing money and buy the Government's new debt itself.

Printing money sounds dubious. Is it a good idea?

Over the past decade, using the printing press to stimulate the financial system has become part of the crisis-handling toolbox. Central banks have regularly printed money either to inject into commercial banks (“quantitative easing”), or for direct use by the Treasury (“debt monetisation”). Both methods allow the central bank (or, effectively, the Government) to borrow money and use it, only to buy the debt back with newly created money. These manoeuvres increase money supply, which enables higher public spending and stimulates private demand. Continuously adding money this way will sooner or later drive up inflation. In a struggling economy this is desirable – it makes debt more manageable and averts deflation – but if taken too far, inflation will erode trust in the currency, and ultimately render it useless.

Can we afford this spree?

Pre-coronavirus, the UK's national debt stood at 79.1% to GDP, a historically high level. Post-corona, economists expect it to reach over 100%, perhaps even to wartime levels of 200%. All of us who live and work in the UK are likely to pay for it in three ways: by working hard (creating growth); by benefiting less from public spending (because of larger public debt); and by allowing inflation to transfer wealth from savers to borrowers (and from the private sector to the Government). The better question, though, is not whether we can afford to do it, but whether we can afford not to. Only if these rescue measures keep people in jobs and save businesses from wreckage will the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes be averted.

Bailing out around the world

It's not just Britain shovelling money into the economy; globally, commitments have reached an unprecedented \$7trn, according to CNN. The US, which saw 3.3 million people newly register as jobless over one week, put the largest rescue package on the table last week: \$2trn for companies and individuals, including unemployment insurance, loans and “helicopter money” – cheques of \$1,200 sent to all Americans earning up to \$75,000 annually, or to married couples earning a combined \$150,000. The EU launched a Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme of €870bn, equal to about 7.3% of the euro area's GDP. In France, President Macron promised that no company, “whatever its size, will be exposed to the risk of collapse”, adding that the state would be ready to nationalise industries at risk. Germany, like Britain, has pulled out all the stops, promising to pay 60% of salaries for workers who go down to part-time.

The measures used by rich nations are not available to many poorer ones: for instance, they cannot easily take out debts in their own currencies. India, however, has announced a \$22bn (£19bn) bailout for the country's poor, in food and cash transfers. The IMF says it is prepared to mobilise \$1trn in spending.

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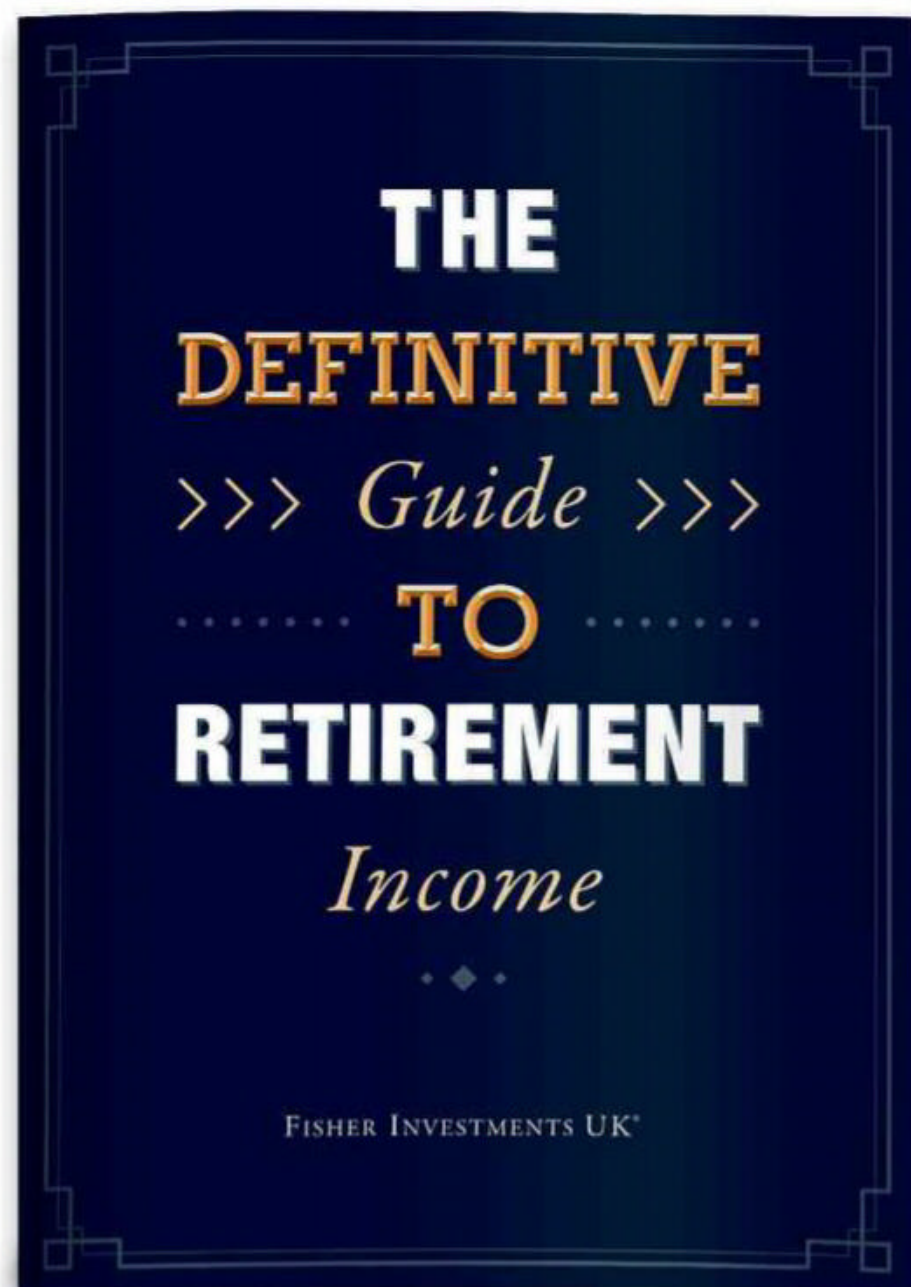
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Holding out for heroes fresh from the fight

Simon Kuper

Financial Times

You hear it every evening across the world – from Italian balconies to the favelas of Brazil: clapping for the nation’s medical workers. It’s a global ritual, says Simon Kuper. And though the applause from my Paris balcony sounds tinny – much of Paris having gone to self-isolate in country homes – it still marks a sea change in our civilisation: “the cult of the health worker is replacing the cult of the soldier”. Before the 21st century, nations named streets after war heroes and spent fortunes on their armies. In the two World Wars, Britain devoted almost half its GDP to its forces. But slowly, our soldier- veneration is fading. In the late 1980s, health spending in the UK overtook defence spending for the first time. And once this pandemic – which has “turbocharged the cult of the medic” – is over, expect health spending to keep on rising; expect factories that once made bombs to make ventilators; expect medical salaries to shoot up. Anyone rash enough to object will be slapped down with a simple retort: “Remember the coronavirus.” Lionising medics may become a cult, but “as cults go, it’s not a bad one”.

How the virus threatens our democracy

Jeremy Cliffe

New Statesman

Now what? That’s the big question, says Jeremy Cliffe. Strict lockdowns have contained the spread of the virus in China and other east Asian nations; in Italy and Austria, too, contagion rates seem to be slowing. But to maintain such restrictions until a vaccine is found would take a terrible toll on people’s mental health. Relaxing them could take us back to square one: when Hong Kong did just that, infections doubled, and it had to reinstate its work-at-home laws. The only other option is bio-surveillance – giving the state the power to monitor our mobile phones, credit cards and online accounts in order to keep track of us after we leave lockdown. In Taiwan, the state uses such data to question anyone breaking quarantine, and to inform and alert people about the movements of infected citizens in their vicinity. It’s a smack in the face for civil liberties, yet even Western democracies are heading that way. On 24 March, our Government sent to the Lords an emergency bill to make it easier to get surveillance warrants. That is what the price of beating the virus is likely to be: a complete transformation of the role and reach of the state.

We were warned; we didn’t listen

David Aaronovitch

The Times

Ever since the first cases of Covid-19 were detected in China, the world has been playing a desperate game of catch-up, imposing drastic lockdowns in an effort to halt the spread of the disease. It didn’t have to be this way, says David Aaronovitch. Public health experts have long warned us that it was a matter of time before a highly contagious and harmful flu virus would evolve, and that the resulting pandemic could kill millions and derail the economy. Yet no one thought it worth stumping up the money to insure against the risk. A report written four years ago by a global health risks commission said the US should devote \$4.5bn a year to equip itself to detect and deal with such a threat. Last September, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board also warned of a flu pandemic, its co-chairs accusing world leaders of succumbing to “a cycle of panic and neglect”. And a month before Covid-19 appeared, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies was calling for a “heightened focus on the development of a universal flu vaccine” and the facilities needed to deliver it. We knew this was coming: truth is, we’ve been “hideously complacent about it for years”.

Hollywood stars begging for attention

Jemima Lewis

The Daily Telegraph

Do you know what brings fame in the coronavirus era? It’s coming up with a meme that makes people laugh, says Jemima Lewis. It’s normal people in messy kitchens in normal homes giving a bleakly funny account of our common predicament. The message behind the clips that have gone viral – the stressed home-schooling mum teaching maths by filling up her wine glass in fractions; the toddler howling when told she’ll have to eat “Mummy’s cooking” now fast-food joints are shut – is that we’re all in the same boat. What a contrast between these “self-deprecating” memes and the tone-deaf, needy response of Hollywood celebrities. The “not male or female” singer Sam Smith posted footage of herself “weeping with ennui” in their £12m mansion (“I hate reading!”). A group of actors, led by *Wonder Woman* star Gal Gadot, sang a mournful rendition of John Lennon’s *Imagine* from their mansions. The attention-starved celebrities just don’t realise that “the world doesn’t want them” right now. They need to step out of the digital limelight and “let the frazzled mums have their day”.

IT MUST BE TRUE... I read it in the tabloids

A website that supplies medical fetish wear has donated its entire stock to the NHS to help alleviate equipment shortages. MedFetUK said it supplied a number of sets of disposable scrubs after being contacted by “desperate” NHS procurement staff. The company – which caters to “a small section of the kink community” – described the equipment shortages as “scandalous”.

A US man who was arrested after leading police on a high-speed car chase explained that he was “trying to teach his dog how to drive”. The man hit two cars before reaching 109mph during the ensuing pursuit. His pit bull was found in the driving seat when he was arrested, said Washington State Trooper Heather Axtman.



Under Spain’s strict lockdown rules, you’re allowed to walk a dog – but not a chicken. A Lanzarote man drew ire online after he was filmed taking a chicken for a stroll on a lead. The police failed to see the funny side, and the 51-year-old faces a fine of up to €30,000 for breaching regulations.

An Australian astrophysicist ended up in hospital after his attempts to stop the spread of Covid-19 backfired. Dr Daniel Reardon, of Melbourne University, got four powerful neodymium magnets stuck up his nose while trying to create a necklace which would sound an alarm if its owner touched their face. He had got “bored” during the process and placed two magnets inside his nostrils, and two on the outside, he told The Guardian. When he removed the magnets from outside his nose, the two inside stuck fast.

The corrupt senator and his falling stock

Matt Taibbi

Rolling Stone

“If there is such a thing as a grand slam of political assholedom”, says Matt Taibbi, then Senator Richard Burr of North Carolina has surely hit it. Consider the facts. The Republican attended a private Senate briefing in late January in which intelligence officials spelled out the dire risks to America from the coronavirus outbreak in China. Soon after, Burr sold off “hundreds of thousands (if not millions) worth of stocks” while continuing in public to parrot President Trump’s line that there was nothing to worry about. Burr did, however, admit how grave the situation was to a group of financial big hitters at a private lunch. When this story recently came out, Burr insisted he’d sold his shares, including those of two vulnerable hotel stocks, only because of news reports he’d seen on TV. It’s possible he’s telling the truth, but it seems far more likely that Burr – along with at least four other senators who dumped stock in the wake of the confidential briefing – is guilty of congressional insider trading. We’ve seen far too much of this over the years. In 2012, Congress officially outlawed such behaviour, but it has since watered down the reform and has never really enforced it. Perhaps Burr’s coronavirus scandal “may finally inspire enough public outrage to provoke change”.

Bullets won’t help bring the virus down

Scott Martelle

Los Angeles Times

Across America, people have been told to take refuge at home and to venture out only to get things they really need, says Scott Martelle. Things like groceries, prescription drugs and petrol. But should weapons also be on that list? Gun rights advocates think they should. They’re lobbying for a federal shutdown-order exemption for gun shops, arguing that these establishments provide an essential service during a pandemic. Unless anyone is planning on “shooting those little coronaviruses one by one”, this is a recipe for disaster. In states that *are* still allowing gun shops to stay open, such as California, there has been a boom in sales, with people queuing round the block outside the most popular shops. Some Asian Americans have reportedly been arming themselves in case they suffer racist attacks linked to the virus. Other people have bought weapons in case there’s a breakdown of social order. Fear is natural at times like this – there’s no reason to let gun shops profit from it. Loading up with rifles isn’t a rational response to a medical emergency. “It is caving in to dark thoughts and expectations, and it moves the needle on our collective safety a little further down the ‘dangerous’ part of the scale.”



Queuing up to buy guns in Culver City, Calif.

The lack of sport is driving us insane

Rick Reilly

The Atlantic

“I miss sports,” says Rick Reilly. Their disappearance from our playing fields, arenas and television screens – no basketball, no golf, no tennis, no Nascar – has left a gaping hole in American life. Nothing like this has ever happened to us before. After Pearl Harbor, Franklin D. Roosevelt persuaded baseball’s ruling body to keep staging games to take people’s minds off the War. A week after the 9/11 attacks, baseball was back on. What are we supposed to watch today for light relief? Reality TV? Forget it. “Sport is the only true reality TV.” Nor are Netflix or Amazon acceptable replacements. Sport has more drama, more tragedy, more plot twists, surprises and cliffhangers than any box set. I was surfing channels and came across women’s WWE pro wrestling, performed in an empty arena. It doesn’t work. The whole point of pro wrestling is that everyone knows it’s faked yet enjoys pretending they don’t know this, along with everyone else in the crowd. Without a howling throng of spectators, it’s “just two magicians trying to trick their cats”. No, for the sake of our sanity in these trying times, we need real sports and we need them soon.

Could the virus kibosh the presidential election?

Possibly the most important US presidential election of our lifetimes is due to take place this November, said Eugene Robinson in *The Washington Post*. But will it actually go ahead? The coronavirus crisis has thrown a spanner into the election-year schedule. The Democratic race for the nomination is in a state of “suspended animation” following the postponement of several decisive primaries. And it’s hard to see how the party conventions, due in July and August, will work. Anyone who has been to one of these crowded events, attended by people from all across the country, will know that “even the most diabolical Bond villain could hardly design a more perfect environment to guarantee the spread of a dangerous pathogen”. The hope is that new Covid-19 infections will naturally decline over the warm summer months, but experts have warned that, even if that happens, a second wave of infections is likely to hit the US in the late autumn – i.e. just before election day.

We need to start making contingency plans right now, said Jon Meacham in *The New York Times*. That means passing a federal law to make voting by mail an option for every eligible voter in the country. “We have world enough and time – and, in several states, the experience” – to make postal voting safe

and secure. Oregon has used it as its standard voting method for more than 20 years – anything to avoid the chaos that could lead to the “nightmare scenario” of Donald Trump taking advantage of the crisis to delay November’s election. Anyone who thinks that’s alarmist hasn’t been paying “even glancing attention to the president’s will to power and contempt for constitutional convention”. In the past, he has joked about ignoring the two-term limit imposed on presidents. He also retweeted a suggestion that he be given two extra years in office to make up for time lost to the Mueller inquiry.

Trump hates losing, said Blake Rutherford on *The Hill*. It’s one reason he cheats at golf. If defeat looks likely in the run-up to the election, he’d try any trick to delay the ballot. The good news, though, is that the constitution “would ultimately stop him cold”. The document is clear that only Congress can delay a federal election, and with Democrats in control of the House, that’s not about to happen. Even if Trump declared martial law, that wouldn’t suspend the constitution. “Americans should have absolute confidence that regardless of Trump’s rhetorical and procedural shenanigans (and no doubt there will be plenty), the November elections will proceed as scheduled.”



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China, coronavirus, and the bid for global supremacy

After months of fierce criticism over its handling of the coronavirus outbreak, Beijing is salvaging its reputation by resorting to “mask diplomacy”, said Brian Wong in *The Diplomat* (Washington). It has sent plane-loads of face masks, ventilators and other medical equipment to countries around the world. Italy, Spain, the Philippines and Iraq have all been offered help, and Chinese doctors have joined emergency teams in foreign hospitals. China’s private sector is stepping in too: telecoms giant Huawei has offered protective equipment to Ireland and Holland, among others, and Alibaba’s Jack Ma has promised to send two million masks to Europe.

Beijing claims it is rising to the challenges of global leadership, while the EU’s response has been “inert”, and the US’s nakedly self-interested (though reports that it tried to buy out a German vaccine company for its own exclusive use have been denied by the company itself). The strategy seems to be working: China’s battered reputation now has a shot at “global redemption”.

Beijing is very pointedly extending help to countries like Serbia and Greece, which feel neglected by Brussels, while leaving the likes of France and Germany out in the cold, said Andreas Ernst in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. So while Europe’s richest countries



Face mask production in China: a shot at redemption?

desperately “hoard” masks and ventilators, planes laden with Chinese equipment land in Belgrade and Athens. Serbia’s president, who has rebuked the EU for failing to help, now describes China’s leader, Xi Jinping, as his “brother”. With “Machiavellian” cunning, Beijing is driving a wedge between European countries, said Peter Rough in *Foreign Policy* (Washington). The virus is “exposing the frailty and brittleness” at the heart of the European project – and the West’s enemies stand to gain.

The assistance is a key part of Beijing’s strategy to deflect blame for its role in the creation of the pandemic, said David Hutt in *Nikkei Asian Review* (Tokyo). But it won’t change perceptions that China “mishandled and tried to cover up” the original outbreak in Wuhan. However cynical China’s approach, said Philippe Bernard in *Le Monde* (Paris), it still stands to gain from it. Beijing is far more effective than Europe at projecting itself as the Good Samaritan: who now remembers the 50 tonnes of medical equipment sent by the EU to Wuhan in February? As the US reels from its “chaotic” management of the crisis, Beijing is filling the international void: Covid-19 may yet be seen as the key catalyst behind China’s rise to the position of the world’s dominant superpower.

SPAIN

Catalans are being conned over Covid-19

El País
(Madrid)

Catalan nationalists have reached a new low, says Javier Sampedro. Desperate to further their separatist agenda, they’ve now resorted to exploiting the coronavirus crisis for their own ends: the region’s pro-independence premier, Quim Torra, has called for Catalonia’s border with Spain to close. In a televised address, he declared this was the only way the region can hope to contain the virus as Spain grapples with one of Europe’s worst outbreaks. It’s “pathetic” – and, what’s more, the logic isn’t even borne out by science. Catalonia is one of the country’s worst affected regions: the big problem will be the virus spreading locally there. Closing the border would be “completely useless”. Predictably, separatist politicians are loudly complaining that Madrid is “stealing their masks and respirators”, and that its hostility to the region is costing Catalan lives. Many ordinary Catalans are ashamed of such “stubborn provincialism”. Those who aren’t must be made to realise that the only ones to benefit if people swallow such claims are “opportunistic” politicians. It’s pure selfishness at a time when the only way to overcome the crisis is with a compassionate and coordinated fightback.

SOUTH AFRICA

There are no social distances in shanty towns

Al Jazeera
(Doha)

The coronavirus crisis hasn’t yet reached an epic scale in Africa, says Karsten Noko, but one struggles to think how the continent will cope when it does. If Italy, with its advanced health system, can buckle under the strain, what hope for war-torn South Sudan – where a health system hardly exists – or for those countries where systems are chronically underfunded, owing to the austerity measures imposed as a condition for receiving IMF loans? Nor is it realistic to talk of “closing borders”: most such borders exist only in theory. For the communities that straddle them, they’re just lines drawn on maps: as in the Ebola crisis, traders and families continue to cross them unhindered. Self-isolation, too, is totally unfeasible in Africa’s cramped slums. In the township of Alexandra, Johannesburg, 700,000 people live in an area of less than two square miles; in Lagos, 300,000 people live over a lagoon on homes built on stilts. As for hygiene, how are Africans to keep washing their hands if they live in villages where they have to rely on a single public tap or borehole to get water, or in cities like Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital, where taps have been nearly dry for a decade? As Africa becomes the next Covid-19 battlefield, a lot more imagination about how to beat it is going to be needed.

ALBANIA

Keep this sham democracy out of the EU

De Volkskrant
(Amsterdam)

It was only six months ago that Emmanuel Macron, the French president, vetoed EU plans to open accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania. Neither Balkan state was ready for membership of the bloc, he argued, a stance that created a rift with other EU leaders. Yet now France, along with the Netherlands (which supported the veto in October), seems ready to drop its opposition. They should have stuck to their guns, says Fatos Lubonja. Albania, in particular, is a corrupt “narco-state” still plagued by organised crime. Released from communist rule in 1990, the country never created more than a “facade” of democracy. Its “weak, informal” economy is now run by an elite in cahoots with criminals, and a recent construction boom in the capital, Tirana, is simply a front for money launderers. Crime has infiltrated the highest level of politics, with MPs’ criminal pasts catching up with them. No wonder so many in this country of 2.9 million people – 56% according to a recent Gallup poll – want to emigrate. But, fearful of leaving a vacuum for Russia or Turkey to fill, EU leaders prefer to turn a blind eye, insisting Albania is making progress towards true democracy. It’s obvious that this is a “myth” – but EU bureaucrats can’t bring themselves to admit it.

Smart garment bags for every traveller



PLIQO bags are so compact – with a miniscule 39cm x 30cm (15in x 12in) footprint – that most airlines classify them as “handbags” or “laptop bags”, meaning you can take them aboard the flight in addition to your regular cabin-luggage allowance. And this despite many carriers being increasingly strict about the size of the baggage you can haul into the cabin.

A game changer

How do PLIQO bags succeed where so many others have failed? The answer is a patented folding system that employs a “variable geometry” hanger and a system of magnets that both folds and holds garments firmly in place. More than 20 prototypes were trialled by real-world travellers over the course of 18 months, before a final design was eventually put into production.

Two final designs, in fact. The PLIQO Carry-On bag is your go-to if you’re looking for a garment carrier that you can sling over your shoulder like a laptop bag. Weighing in at just over a kilogram, it includes an adjustable strap, grab handle and internal organiser, as well as two external pockets to store smaller travel items.

The PLIQO Pack-In, by contrast, would be the ideal option if you’re looking for a garment bag that simply packs inside your other luggage. Slightly thinner, it weighs just 850g thanks to its innovative and minimalist design.

Both PLIQO bags come with a strap to attach your bag to a wheeled case, three internal compartments and an extension flap for larger garments such as ball gowns and morning suits.

PLIQO's bags are a game-changer for business travellers

And we’re delighted to announce that PLIQO is working on a more rugged garment bag aimed at commuters who jog or cycle to work, and a version designed specifically for women’s formalwear.

Right now, the idea of hopping on a flight, or dashing off to a wedding, is almost inconceivable. But when the time comes to celebrate the return to normality, there might be no better gift for the hard-to-please traveller or fashionista in your life, than a PLIQO bag.

What’s more, readers of The Week can get a 15% discount using promo code PLIQO-15 on the company’s website:

pliqobag.com

The PLIQO bag, and company founder Patrick Tatham, recently featured on BBC2’s Dragons’ Den. The episode, first broadcast on Sunday 22nd March, is available on the BBC’s iPlayer.

There are a few lucky people who have the superhuman ability to look immaculate, no matter how far they have travelled.

And then there’s the rest of us – mere mortals who, no matter how sharp we look when we walk out our front door, can’t help but gather crumples and everyday detritus. It seems the smarter the outfit, the faster the entropy sets in.

For most of us, then, the secret to a pristine arrival, whether at a business meeting or a special occasion, is to travel in something more comfortable and keep the gladrag under wraps. It really doesn’t pay to travel in formal wear.

Fortunately, at long last, there is a solution to this predicament. PLIQO has created an elegant, cabin-friendly garment bag that, unlike its predecessors, lets you keep your formalwear in perfect condition in – or alongside – your hand luggage. It’s been dubbed “the smartest garment bag in the world”.

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What the scientists are saying...

Invisible smiles

If older people view the world as a threatening place, it may be because as we age, we become less adept at spotting friendly faces – but we do not lose our ability to notice a frown. For the study at Kyoto University, published in the journal *Royal Society Open Science*, two groups of volunteers – one in their early 20s, the other in their 70s – were shown photographs of people with various expressions (happy, cross and neutral), and were asked to classify their emotions. The younger participants were quick to “read” both positive and negative emotions, while taking slightly longer to spot neutral ones. The older volunteers, however, though relatively quick to spot negative emotions, found happy faces no easier to classify than neutral ones. According to the scientists, this suggests that the evolutionary value of detecting particular emotions changes over the course of our lives: while for younger people making new friends is a priority, for older people, the more important thing is to be able to spot threatening, angry faces, and so avoid “physiological and psychological harm”.

Primordial fish fingers

Analysis of a 380-million-year-old fossil has revealed that before fish evolved into land-dwelling creatures, a specific species developed fingers in its front (pectoral) fins. These may have enabled the creature to spread its weight out through its fins, and so support itself in shallow primordial seas – a crucial first step in the transition to dry land. The 1.5 metre-long fossilised skeleton, discovered in pieces in Quebec in 2010, belonged to a sharp-fanged aquatic creature called *Elpistostege watsoni*, which lived during the Devonian period. After painstakingly putting the fragments back



Elpistostege watsoni: fingers locked in a fin

together, scientists carried out CT scans on the skeleton which confirmed that the fish’s pectoral fins contained tiny bones – the precursors of vertebrate arms and fingers, including the humerus, radius, ulna and phalanges organised in digits. “This is the first time that we have unequivocally discovered fingers locked in a fin in any known fish,” said Prof John Long of Flinders University in Australia, a co-author of the *Nature*-published study. *Elpistostege* may not be our ancestor, his colleague added, but it’s the “closest we can get to a true ‘transitional fossil’, an intermediate between fishes and tetrapods”.

Electric cars are greener

Electric cars have their detractors: the climate controversialist Bjørn Lomborg recently argued that they are just “expensive gadgets” to make rich people feel that they are doing their bit for the planet. But a new study in *Nature*

Sustainability suggests that such scepticism is misplaced: the vast majority of electric cars are already greener than their petrol and diesel equivalents – and they will become even more green, as countries increasingly switch to non-carbon sources of electricity. For their global survey, scientists compared projected carbon emissions for all the conventional and electric cars sold in 59 regions representing 95% of global road traffic. They found that in 53 of the areas studied, electric cars already have lower net carbon emissions than traditional ones, with the exceptions being those in countries such as India and Poland, which are still heavily reliant on coal and gas. In countries that have done most to abandon fossil fuels, such as Sweden and France, electric cars are up to 70% more CO₂ efficient than traditional vehicles; in the UK, the average CO₂ saving is 30%. “The idea that electric vehicles or heat pumps could increase emissions is essentially a myth,” said lead author Dr Florian Knobloch, of Radboud University.

Salt weakens the immune system

A high-salt diet doesn’t just raise blood pressure: new research suggests that it also weakens the body’s ability to fight bacterial infections. For the German study, ten healthy volunteers aged between 20 and 50 were given an extra six grams of salt a day, on top of their normal diet. After a week, their immune cells were found to be less effective at engulfing and killing bacteria than they had been. Co-author Prof Christian Kurts, from the University of Bonn, said the results were concerning because it’s not that difficult to consume an extra 6g of salt a day. “This is roughly the amount contained in two fast food meals, i.e. two burgers and two portions of French fries,” he said.

Rich Romans prized their lapdogs

They are a much prized fashion accessory among the A-list now, and it seems tiny dogs may have been similarly popular two millennia ago. Archaeologists excavating a Roman cemetery in Córdoba, in southern Spain, have uncovered the remains of a 22.5cm-tall dog that they think was transported thousands of miles in order to be a rich person’s pampered pooch. With a small skull and large bulging eyes, it would have closely resembled a modern Pekingese.

Analysis of carbon and oxygen isotopes in the dog’s bones suggest that it had a similar diet to the region’s humans – suggesting that it may have been fed from its owners’ table – but that it was born in the eastern Mediterranean. Yet the dog’s status did not prevent it from meeting a grisly end: its neck was snapped. The likelihood is the dog, which was about two years old, and which appears to have been pregnant, was sacrificed, possibly after its owner’s death. Romans are thought mainly to have used dogs for hunting and as guard dogs. However, in one of his books, Pliny described how a tiny dog could be lain on a woman’s body to ease a stomach ache.



Paris Hilton: honouring a Roman tradition?

Pandemic slashes pollution

The coronavirus pandemic is having a dramatic impact on air pollution levels, reports *The Guardian*. Data from the European Space Agency’s Sentinel-5P satellite has revealed that there was a marked drop in levels of the toxic gas nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) as lockdowns were introduced across Europe last month. In Milan, average concentrations of NO₂ during the week of 16-22 March were 21% lower than for the same week in 2019; in Bergamo, they were 47% lower. After Spain and Portugal went into lockdown, Madrid’s NO₂ levels fell 55% in about a week; Lisbon’s fell 40%. Nasa reported similar falls in China during the lockdown in Hubei province. “We’re inadvertently conducting the largest-scale experiment ever seen,” said Prof Paul Monks, of the University of Leicester. “Are we looking at what we might see in the future if we can move to a low-carbon economy?”

Life in lockdown: a fundamental loss of freedom

“The strangest thing, in this strangest of months, is how willingly people have surrendered private freedoms for public good,” said Janice Turner in *The Times*. “We’re closing all the pubs and restaurants.” Great, we reply. “You can’t swim or play football either.” Oh, all right. And you have to stop going to church, seeing your friends and even visiting your mum. Sigh, OK. In a few weeks, we have been deprived of a host of fundamental liberties: to work, to move, to socialise. Many Britons are now living in solitary, for 23 hours a day; some in extremely difficult conditions. But to an extraordinary degree, people have accepted this, and they have been sticking to the rules. In my poor part of London, I have seen “gold standard” queuing, walkers pacing parks in pairs, and deserted streets. But we’re only in week two of what could be months of confinement. People will only keep complying with “authoritarian rules if the authorities remain just”. And so far, there have been too many reports of puffed-up officials applying the rules heavily-handedly, unnecessarily and, in some cases, wrongly.

Derbyshire police were among the first off the blocks, said Benedict Spence on *The Independent*. Last week, they posted on Twitter drone-footage of people who had driven to a beauty spot and gone for a walk in empty countryside. The response to this exercise in overreach was “as immediate as it was furious”. Quite apart from the fact that we’re allowed to take exercise outdoors (and need to, if our sanity is to be preserved), the police’s use of surveillance equipment to identify and shame law-abiding citizens bore a disturbing resemblance to the tactics deployed by the authorities in China. But Derbyshire police weren’t the only ones to overstep the mark. In Denton and Droylsden, in Greater Manchester, they took it upon themselves to say how long people were allowed outside to exercise (“around an hour a day”).

Compared with other European countries, our police have been restrained, said Nick Cohen in *The Observer*. By the middle of last week, police officers in Spain had issued 81,000 fines; in France, people say you can barely leave the house without being stopped and questioned. In Britain, police say they want to rely on “persuasion” to keep people at home – hence the warnings to day-trippers. Of course, we must resist any needless curtailments of our liberties; but we must also watch our own behaviour.



Are the police being overzealous?

Already, police forces have reported being inundated by calls from people reporting their neighbours for going outside. The media has delighted in running overblown stories about hoarders and bog-roll bandits endangering our health, because newspapers know their readers love the feeling of “outraged self-righteousness”. As the lockdown takes its toll, bringing ennui, isolation, job losses and despair, we must make sure this crisis does not turn us into a “nation of little tyrants”.

Given the way the nation has pulled together, that seems unlikely, said *The Observer*. Boris Johnson has sometimes cast his rhetoric in martial terms, but “the British people have never needed a war as an excuse” to rally behind the collective good. Britain is “a nation of collection tin shakers and Red Nose activists, of helpers for heroes and GoFundMe marathon runners”. So far, 750,000 people have responded to an appeal for volunteers to help the NHS; and last Thursday, in a “heart-swelling” display of unity, people up and down the country came out of their houses and leaned out of windows to cheer the medical staff working at the sharp end of this pandemic. What would be gratifying is if those of us saving lives by simply staying on our sofas could remember all the people – care home staff, supermarket workers, refuse collectors – who are making our lives possible by still going out to work.

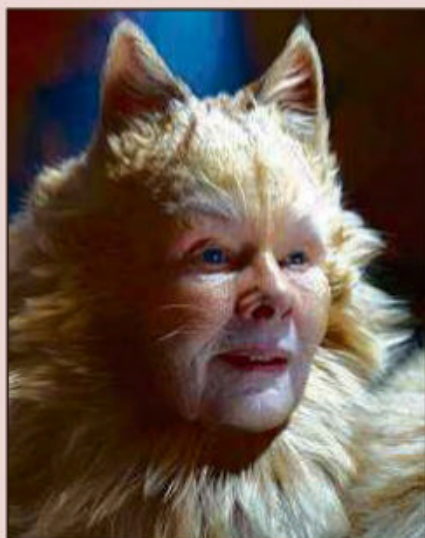
“We must make sure this crisis does not turn us into a nation of little tyrants”

The media have been alive with stories of “inspiring altruism”, said Jenni Russell in *The Times*, but there have been villains too. Hand sanitisers have

been stolen from hospitals; people have been coughing at others to scare them. We are on high alert for such tales, because we want to know if we are safe, if we can trust one another – if our society is fundamentally good, or bad. We’re watching companies in the same way: are they doing their best to help their workers and their customers (Leon, Fuller’s and others), or chucking them aside? But we should remember that those companies who put their shareholders first are abiding by laws made by politicians we elected. Gordon Ramsay can sack 500 of his staff, rather than use government support to furlough them, because there’s no obligation to do anything else. When this pandemic is over, we will have choices. We can “cherish and keep” the new support systems we have created. We can choose to boycott the rapacious firms and reward the ones that stepped up. Or, we could discover “a new enthusiasm for changing the rules of capitalism’s game”.

Pick of the week's *Gossip*

It was panned by critics, but *Cats* has been amusing people in lockdown. Now, screenwriter Jack Waj has revealed the existence of an unseen edit of the film. He explained that he knew a producer who had been hired to “remove CGI buttoholes that had been inserted a few months before” – meaning that “somewhere out there, there exists a buttohole cut of *Cats*”. Fan Seth Rogen immediately tweeted



“Release the Buttohole Cut of *Cats*!!” – a demand that has been “liked” 50,000 times.

Meera Syal is used to working from home: the actress says auditions have been conducted online for some time now. You are emailed lines, film yourself on your phone and send it off, “hoping this will get you to the next round when you may meet an actual person who won’t judge you on your nasty curtains”, she writes in *Saga* magazine. What is new for her, though, is the type of role she’s auditioning for. Recent examples include “Weary inspector” and “Bollywood-inspired granny”, says Syal, 58. “I’m now reading for the mother of actors whose wife I was playing ten years ago.”

The billionaire media mogul David Geffen has reassured the American people that he is OK, by Instagramming photos of his self-isolation on a \$590m superyacht in the Grenadines. “Sunset last night,” one was captioned. “I’m hoping everybody is staying safe.” But messages posted by rich celebrities in isolation are not going down well in a country where millions are losing their jobs – and this one attracted such a furious backlash, Geffen (sometimes suggested as the inspiration for Carly Simon’s song *You’re So Vain*) has since deleted the post and made his Instagram account private.

Salmond: not guilty, but tarnished

“In other circumstances, the verdict would have been the Scottish political event of the year,” said *The Economist*. But amid the crisis, the acquittal of Alex Salmond last week passed relatively unnoticed. Scotland’s former first minister was found not guilty of 12 charges of sexual assault; the jury found a 13th charge to be not proven. “Mr Salmond is a free man. But it is clear that he does not intend to go quietly.” During the trial, he claimed that the allegations against him – which ranged from indecent assault to attempted rape – had been either exaggerations or “deliberate fabrications for political purposes”. Afterwards, he said his legal team had been unable to produce “certain evidence” in court, but that it would “see the light of day” at some point; he apparently believes the allegations against him were leaked by members of the SNP hierarchy to thwart his political comeback.



Admitted to a “sleepy cuddle”

Salmond, who is married, admitted to having a “sleepy cuddle” with one witness, and to what his QC Gordon Jackson called “a bit of how’s yer father” with another – both members of his staff far younger than he. He also admitted that he should have been “more careful” with women’s “personal space”. Clearly, the jury concluded that this fell short of criminal conduct, said Alex Bell, Salmond’s former speech-writer, in *The Courier* (Dundee). But “when your best defence is ‘I’m sleazy but not criminal’, it’s nothing to smile about”. His “barely suppressed” grin outside court was not exactly becoming.

Be fair, said Paul Kavanagh in *The National*. The trial’s over. Salmond is innocent; he was cleared of all charges. The continued casting of aspersions by people who were expecting – perhaps hoping for – a guilty verdict is a “grave injustice”. True enough, said Alan Cochrane in *The Daily Telegraph*. But Salmond still needs to think hard before he launches a “campaign of retribution” against the senior members of his own party that he blames for his ordeal. There’s no doubt that his own image has been “dented” by the trial: his own QC said he wished Salmond was “a better man”. And starting a full-blooded civil war just to get his own back might do grave damage to his party.

Salmond left court with “a smug, injured air of vindication”, said Sarah Baxter in *The Sunday Times*. This was quite extraordinary, because anyone else would have been mortified by what came out during the trial, guilty verdict or not. Nine women alleged that the former first minister grabbed their breasts and backsides, offered unwelcome kisses and off-colour sexual banter, touched their legs or stroked their hair.

Jeremy Corbyn: vindicated at last?

Only Jeremy Corbyn could see the coronavirus crisis as a “vindication of his world outlook”, said Robert Shrimsley in the *Financial Times*. In a valedictory BBC interview before his successor – probably Keir Starmer – is announced on 4 April, Corbyn complained to Laura Kuenssberg that he had been “denounced as somebody that wanted to spend more money than we could possibly afford, in order to right the social wrongs of this country”. But now, only three months later, he had been “proved absolutely right”, he declared. It was, said Shrimsley, “one last lesson to his successor in how not to be the leader of the opposition, if his entire period in charge had not already fulfilled that need”.



“A leader like no other”

“Given how strange life has become in the last few weeks”, it is easy to forget just “how bizarre” the Corbyn era has been, said John Ashmore on CapX. There were “the countless celebrity endorsements, the Grime4Corbyn, the chanting hordes at Glastonbury”. There was “the endless internal chaos – the vote of no confidence, mass defections, never-ending anti-Semitism and the appointment of real,

live Stalinists to the leader’s inner circle”. Strangest of all, let’s not forget that at the 2017 election, Labour won more than 40% of the vote – a measure of the frustration in much of the country, and the enthusiasm for a different kind of politics, especially among the young. If the “least capable leader” in Labour history came so close to victory, “imagine what someone with a bit more charisma and political nous could do”.

“Mistakes were made” during Corbyn’s tenure, said Ken Loach in the *I* newspaper. His Brexit position, for instance, was weak and confusing. But he was a Labour leader “like no other”, who “put the working class first”, inspired the young, and more than doubled membership. What doomed him was his constant vilification not just by the *Daily Mail*, but by the liberal press too. Ultimately, Corbyn “leaves his post a two-time election loser who led Labour in 2019 to its worst electoral performance since 1935”, said Philip Collins in *The Times*. Any attempt to put a positive spin on that only betrays the Left’s strange tendency “to regard itself as the winner, even from the vantage of obvious defeat”.

Wit & Wisdom

“Everybody knows that pestilences have a way of recurring in the world; yet somehow we find it hard to believe in ones that crash down on our heads from a blue sky.”

Albert Camus, quoted in The Paris Review

“It is a great advantage to a president, and a major source of safety to the country, for him to know he is not a great man.”

President Calvin Coolidge, quoted in Forbes

“All logical arguments can be defeated by the simple refusal to reason logically.”

Physicist Steven Weinberg, quoted on The Browser

“There may be years of crowded passion in a word, and half a life in a sentence.”

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, quoted in The Washington Post

“Virtue has never been as respectable as money.”

Mark Twain, quoted in Forbes

“Hollywood is wonderful. Anyone who doesn’t like it is either crazy or sober.”

Raymond Chandler, quoted in The Irish Times

“You should never say bad things about the dead, only good... Joan Crawford is dead. Good.”

Bette Davis, quoted in The Sunday Telegraph

“In democratic countries, knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all the others.”

Alexis de Tocqueville, quoted in The Observer

Statistics of the week

The Central African Republic has three ventilators for a population of five million.

Norwegian Refugee Council

Between 1939 and 1945, reported crimes in England and Wales rose from 303,711 to 478,394, an increase of 57%.

The Guardian



The Invincible Exposed Shower Mixer



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Pick of the week's correspondence

A perilous walk...

To The Times

Coronavirus has led to many good decisions made in haste and many poor ones. My local council has veered towards the poor. Hammersmith and Fulham council closed all its parks at the weekend. If you wish to do your daily exercise/walk the dog, you now have only pavements to do so, making it impossible to maintain social distancing if someone is coming the other way. As the parks are now closed, invariably someone is approaching. The council has managed to make walking more, rather than less, dangerous. I note that the traffic wardens are still working and giving out tickets. Today on my pavement walk (and hello to all those I passed far too close) I noticed one waiting outside a pharmacy, ready and poised. People who had driven there were presumably trying to avoid the full pavements. It is shameful.

Edgar Morse, London

...is better than driving

To The Daily Telegraph

I fear people are missing the point regarding the safety of driving to a nice deserted area for exercise. While it is unlikely that they will catch the virus in such places, if they have an accident on the way, or fall and break a leg, they will be diverting our strained emergency services.

Dione Roberts, Worcester

A royal prerogative

To The Guardian

I'm sorry to hear that Prince Charles has tested positive for the coronavirus, but how come the rich and privileged can be tested while vital health workers cannot, and instead have to waste precious working time to self-isolate?

Marie Paterson, Nuneaton, Warwickshire

Kindness of strangers

To The Sunday Telegraph

We have been overwhelmed by the kindness of complete strangers during this crisis. On Thursday my wife and I visited our local supermarket for provisions. There was a queue outside, and when we walked around the corner we saw that it stretched a long

The banks are no help

To The Daily Telegraph

I am a business adviser with clients across the North West. Four of my clients – all well-run businesses and financially sound until the coronavirus struck – have approached their banks for support under the initiatives recently announced by the Government. Without exception, they were turned down, but the banks offered them alternative products, which in some cases involved 22% interest rates, exorbitant arrangement fees and personal guarantees.

I'm afraid to say the banks are not helping at all. Indeed, they are seeking to profit from the situation by tying desperate business owners into punitive deals that will create hardship and, in some cases, bankruptcy – the exact opposite of the Government's objective.

David Lee, Wistaston, Cheshire

To The Sunday Telegraph

My business employs 64 people and has a turnover of £10m. I have just furloughed 59 staff. Many have made significant salary sacrifices. Even so, we will run out of money. Before this happens, I will be forced to start laying staff off.

The Chancellor said that good businesses will get a loan on favourable terms ("whatever it takes"). But I was wrong to think that the government-backed loan was to support small business. It's not: it's a money-maker for the banks. We are asked for personal guarantees, proof of future income and cashflow models – and offered usurious terms and interest rates in return.

These loans should be interest-free, and made available to any profitable business immediately. The only question lenders should be asking is: how much do you need?

Peter Moore, London

way back. There was a biting wind, so we decided that it was too cold for us, at our age, to stand around, and resigned ourselves to returning home empty-handed.

As we walked back along the line, complete strangers – much younger – beckoned us to join the queue nearer the front and would not take no for an answer. We were then ushered to the front by successive shoppers.

Their kindness brought tears to our eyes and strengthened our faith in human nature.

Frank Vickers, Woking, Surrey

Climbing Everest

To The Times

Our house has 24 steps from the entrance hall to the top bedroom. Each step has a rise of seven-and-a-half inches. My wife (who is 74) and I (83) climb this "North Face" 20 times each morning before breakfast, and repeat the exercise at some time in the afternoon.

On 18 March, we topped out on Ben Nevis. We expect to reach the summit of the Matterhorn on the afternoon

of 4 April. If the present conditions continue, we should celebrate the conquest of Everest some time on 25 April.

Alan Phillips, London

Plague on Shakespeare

To the Financial Times

During Shakespeare's London career (1588-1613) there were at least three closures of the playhouses for plague, each lasting between one and three years. (In 1592, 15,000 Londoners died – 7.5% of the population.) Add political closures, and half that career was spent "dark", to use an anachronism. So he diversified, writing two narrative poems, one a bestseller (*Venus and Adonis* in 1593), sold off his early sonnets (1609) as well as investing in land and property for income and produce.

The actors could always tour to plague-free towns and to rich patrons with country house boltholes. The monarch provided *ex gratia* subsidy, James more generously than Elizabeth since the companies provided court entertainment.

But with all performing outlets today in effect closed

down, for a less ruthless variant of what the Tudors called "the sweating sickness", Shakespeare's successors are in a more parlous position, if likely shorter-term and hopefully a one-off.

Chris Crowcroft, Elstree, Hertfordshire

Closing our churches

To The Times

It is extraordinary that for the first time since Pope Innocent III placed England under an Interdict to admonish King John in 1208, our churches and cathedrals are closed, even for private prayer – this time by the edict of our own archbishops. To deprive those who seek solace at a time of pestilence is both a disturbing assertion of executive authority and an abdication of spiritual leadership.

Lord Cormack, Lincoln

How to stop an elephant

To The Economist

Conflict between humans and elephants remains a problem in many parts of the world, including Sri Lanka. There is a very simple and cost-effective natural solution: beehive fences. Elephants are terrified of bees and will flee at even the sound of them. Beehive fences involve wires strung between hives; if elephants walk through the wires they irritate the bees, which swarm out and chase them away. Lucy King developed the concept and it is now used widely in east Africa. Not only is it an effective deterrent, farmers can also make money from selling honey.

Richard Milburn, King's College London



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Book of the week

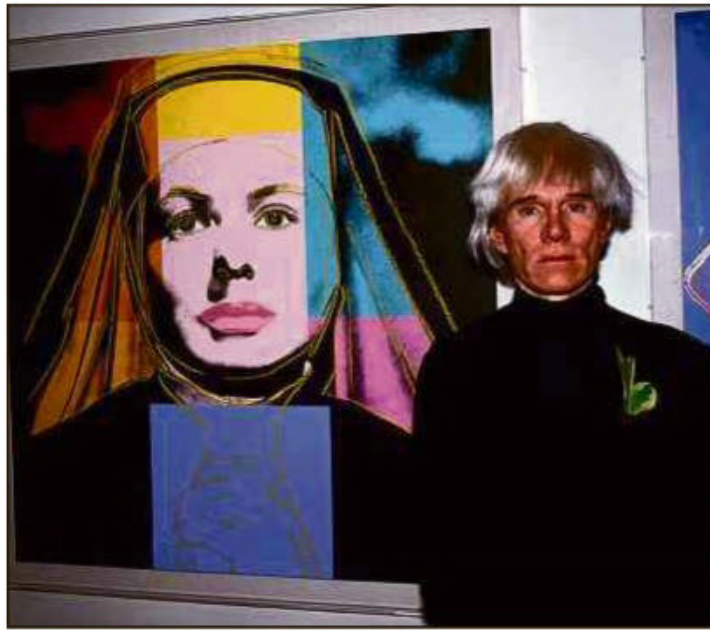
Warhol: A Life as Art

by Blake Gopnik

Allen Lane 976pp £35

How great an artist was Andy Warhol, asked Kathryn Hughes in *The Guardian*. In this “mesmerising” biography, the veteran American critic Blake Gopnik suggests that Warhol “has overtaken Picasso as the most important and influential artist of the 20th century” – and that he even belongs on the “top peak of Parnassus, beside Michelangelo and Rembrandt”. Such claims may seem “vertiginous”, but Gopnik “persuasively assembles his case” in this book, which is as much “art history and philosophy as it is biography”. Based on the thousands of documents that Warhol, a lifelong hoarder, left behind, it presents its subject as a trail-blazing figure whose most iconic works – his “silkscreens of Marilyn, Jackie and Mao”, his “iterations” of Campbell’s soup – reframed the very terms on which art could be discussed.

This “monumental” biography also corrects the prevailing view of Warhol as a feeble – and mostly asexual – waif, said Mick Brown in *The Daily Telegraph*. Born in Pittsburgh in 1928 to parents newly arrived from what is now Slovakia, Warhol, it’s true, was a shy and sickly child. Yet after relocating to New York



in 1949, he worked out regularly (Lou Reed called his strength “incredible”) and became a prolific sexual adventurer, seducing a series of (usually younger) men. Like Robert Mapplethorpe, he was obsessed with penises: according to a friend, total strangers would be asked to drop their pants, and “Andy would make a drawing”. Warhol’s gayness, Gopnik shows, influenced every aspect of his art, from his camp love of pop culture to his outsider perspective on America.

Warhol’s extraordinary success was based on one single insight, said Roger Lewis in *The Times*: “that lowly illustration had potential as fine art”, that America’s brash materialist culture deserved to be celebrated. And even this wasn’t exactly new: hadn’t the Dadaists reached the same conclusion decades earlier? Written in “naïf prose”, *Warhol: A Life as Art* is an “appallingly bloated” treatment of a “tiny overinflated talent”. In one sense, though, this is clearly a “definitive” biography, said Waldemar Januszczak in *The Sunday Times*. “It is impossible to imagine anyone finding out much more about Andy than is recorded here.” Warhol junkies will doubtless appreciate the mini-biographies of “Factory citizenry”, and the blow-by-blow account of the “operation that saved him when he was shot by Valerie Solanas”. For all the detail, though, I would have preferred something less weighty, but with a “truer perspective”.

Rake’s Progress

by Rachel Johnson

Simon & Schuster 272pp £16.99

In this “fabulously indiscreet and funny” memoir, Rachel Johnson describes her ill-fated attempt to become a pro-Remain MEP, said Gaby Hinsliff in *The Observer*. Johnson, a successful journalist, had always resisted the lure of politics. But finding herself appalled by the prospect of Brexit – and her elder brother’s role in bringing it about – she decided to stand in last May’s European elections, as a candidate for the “breakaway” centrist party Change UK. Her attempt to “block Brexit” could hardly have gone worse, said David Sexton in the *London Evening Standard*: the party failed to win a single seat, and Johnson proved a “calamitous candidate”, committing a series of cringeworthy gaffes. In one interview, she described herself as “the rat that jumps on the sinking ship”; in another, defending herself against the charge that she had two Agas, she pointed out that at least they were “not in the same house”. With *Rake’s Progress*, though, she has put the experience to good use: this memoir is “remarkable for its radical honesty”.

It’s an “entertaining” book, with some nice turns of phrase, said Patrick Kidd in *The Times*: I loved the description of Annunziata Rees-Mogg as “pale and serious as an El Greco”. Still, I found myself wishing I was reading a different work – one focused less on the campaign trail, and more on what it was like to grow up in the “family firm”. The Johnsons are the closest thing Britain has to the Kennedys (or should that be the Kardashians?), and it would be fascinating to read a proper account of their background. Even so, “there is a lot of fun here”, because Rachel “is not worried about causing offence”, said Rosamund Urwin in *The Sunday Times*. Our PM does not come out of it well. “I love Brexit,” he proclaims at one point. “I love how it makes everyone go so mad.”



Novel of the week

Lost Children Archive

by Valeria Luiselli

4th Estate 400pp £16.99

In one sense, this English-language debut by the Mexican-American writer Valeria Luiselli is a “classic road-trip novel”, said Adam Lively in *The Sunday Times*. An unnamed narrator, her husband and their two children (by previous relationships) drive from New York to Arizona. She is a radio journalist, hoping to make a documentary about the child migrants separated from their parents at the border; he is a “more experimental documenter of sound”, obsessed by capturing “echoes” of the last Apaches. The couple argue, and their children’s perspective is captured with “touching sympathy”. Much of the novel (which won this year’s Rathbones Folio Prize) is an “engrossing” family portrait.

As it progresses, however, *Lost Children Archive* becomes increasingly experimental, said Siobhan Murphy in *The Times*. The narrative is “interrupted” by “musings” on migration, Ezra Pound and Susan Sontag. In short, this is no “beach read”. But it is an occasionally beautiful, often “trenchant” work whose “motivating crisis” – the plight of undocumented children – “forces itself through with moving insistence”.

THE WEEK Bookshop

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We will endeavour to fulfil all outstanding orders, but cannot take any new orders at this time.

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Calming podcasts for testing times

Field Recordings *Apple, Spotify*

If you're going "stir-crazy and longing to be outside", this wonderful new podcast could be the answer, says Fiona Sturges in the FT. Dreamt up by Eleanor McDowall – the British producer of "such gems" as BBC Radio's *Short Cuts* – it will help to "bring the outdoors indoors", and acts as a "balm of the soul" in testing times. It has no introduction or narration: it consists simply of recordings of everyday sounds of natural life, from around the world: cicadas and kookaburras in Australia's Golden Gully; water lapping on the shores of Puerto Rico; insects and birds waking up in a tropical rainforest in Sri Lanka, "their calls taking on the rhythms of electronic music". I found it transfixing, "medicinal even".



How to Fail with Elizabeth Day: eye-opening

How to Fail with Elizabeth Day *Apple, Spotify* Now is the ideal time to listen to this "brilliant" podcast by journalist and author Elizabeth Day, says Lydia Winter in The Independent. Each instalment features a guest discussing three of their life's apparent failures or trials – and how they coped with them. Their accounts are deeply personal, eye-opening and often uplifting. Recent subjects have been Lisa Taddeo, author of the acclaimed *Three Women*, and Alain de Botton, the philosopher and founder of The School of Life. In particular, look for the episode in which the

tech entrepreneur Mo Gawdat talks about surviving and even thriving following the death of his son – and a new special episode in which Day and Gawdat explore how to cope with anxiety during the pandemic.

Gaba *Apple* This "highly original" podcast is an enchanting mix of meditation, soundscape and soul-baring, says Miranda Sawyer in The Observer. The words of our "reassuring" host, Adam Martin, hover over "tweeting birds, familiar and unfamiliar music and sampled speech", often taken from old films or songs. The most recent episode, *Keep Calm Carry On*, features a mixture of Joanna Lumley, David Attenborough, Charles Hawtrey

and *The Lark Ascending*. "Lovely."

In Wordsworth's Footsteps *BBC Sounds* "Sometimes you hear radio so good that you wonder how on earth anyone was allowed to make it," says Charlotte Runcie in The Daily Telegraph. Looking for "thoughtful conversation, beautiful original music, critical insight and an atmosphere that transports you somewhere else"? Look no further than this sublime three-part series in which Sir Jonathan Bate explores Wordsworth's poetry (read by Simon Russell Beale) and the landscapes that inspired him. This "rejuvenating" series, first broadcast on Radio 4 earlier this year "filled my heart with pleasure".

Albums of the week: three new releases

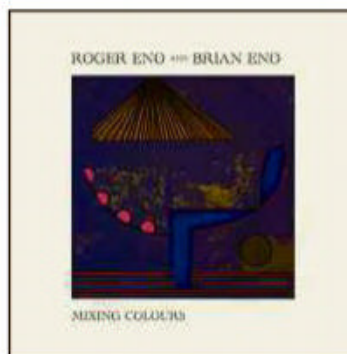
**Barbara Hannigan/
Ludwig
Orchestra: La
Passione**
Alpha Classics
£12.50



"Barbara Hannigan is a total wonder," said Geoff Brown in The Times – but which of the Canadian's gifts "do you worship first"? The strength and purity of her soprano voice? The astonishing dexterity that lets her sing and conduct at the same time? Or her "flair for adventurous programming, which makes unlikely connections between music from different centuries"? All are in play on this thrilling disc, where the "big prize" is Gérard Grisey's superb *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil* (1998). This is death-haunted, mind-expanding, sonorously imaginative music, "brilliant realised" by Hannigan and her collaborators.

The disc presents Grisey's work alongside Haydn's *Symphony No. 49 in F minor* (which lends its nickname, *La Passione*, to the collection), plus the "soaring" *Djamila Boupacha* movement from Luigi Nono's *Canti di vita e d'amore*. I have reservations about how they work as a "triptych", said Andrew Clement in The Guardian. But this recording evokes Grisey's "haunting, unclassifiably expressive world more vividly than ever".

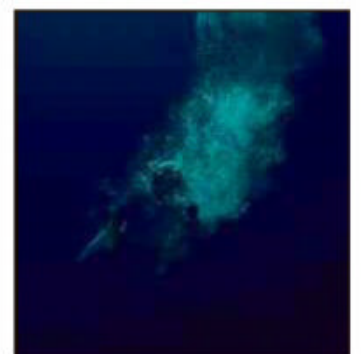
**Brian Eno and
Roger Eno:
Mixing Colours**
*Deutsche
Grammophon*
£10.99



Fifteen years in the on-off making, this first full album of instrumental collaborations between Brian Eno and his younger brother Roger – a modern classical composer and experimental musician – is a "balm for these anxious times", said Kitty Empire in The Observer. These "bejewelled" pieces mainly begin with Roger's slow bell-like piano key strikes; Brian's electronica is first interwoven and then comes to the fore. The sound they've created is reminiscent of "an analogue record, each note having a furry aura"; the effect is of "slowly unspooling" beauty – "meditative, sometimes more austere, often less".

The release of this wonderful record could hardly be more timely, agreed Will Hodgkinson in The Times. The instrumental pieces that make up *Mixing Colours* "are the aural equivalent of abstract art". There is no clear narrative to the composition, but the overall effect is contemplative and calming. The Eno brothers' collaboration transports you to "an inner world you won't want to leave, especially while the outer one is off-limits".

**Låpsley:
Through Water**
*Banquet
Records*
£9.99



Billie Eilish's first single, 2015's *Ocean Eyes*, was inspired by a song she'd heard in school dance classes, said Ludovic Hunter-Tilney in the FT. That song, *Station*, was by another teenager – the York-raised Liverpudlian Holly Lapsley Fletcher. But while Eilish became a global superstar, Låpsley's 2016 debut album – a promising but overloaded blend of electronic anthems, trip-hop and disco – was only a modest success. Now, though, Låpsley's back with a second record that is far more "self-assured" and sophisticated.

Låpsley has "brushed away the lint left by an excess of collaborators" and – acting as her own writer and producer – is now making "outstanding" music, said Ben Beaumont-Thomas in The Guardian. The "brilliant" singles *Womxn* and *My Love Was Like the Rain* have a "subtle Latin touch". Supremely powerful piano ballad *Speaking of the End* is a "real Adele-grade tearjerker, but played with the pointillist quality of Ryuichi Sakamoto". And the Kate Bush-influenced *Ligne 3* is the "intensely poetic high of an often exceptional record".

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The Week's own podcast, *The Week Unwrapped*, covers the biggest unreported stories of the week (available on Apple and Google)

THE WEEK
UNWRAPPED

From opera to rock... the show is still going on

It's a "pretty gloomy time" to be a music lover, said The Daily Telegraph. Theatres and concert venues have shuttered, and live events from Glastonbury to Glyndebourne have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely. But the good news is that rock and classical musicians alike have come up with new ways to reach listeners online, and many venues are using new technology to make world-class performances available to anyone with an internet connection. Major classical concerts are being held without audiences and streamed live, while pop acts are broadcasting online gigs on social media channels: Elton John hosted a star-studded fundraising concert from his home in LA. It's an encouraging sign that "slowing as the arts world may be, it has not yet ground to a complete halt".



Elton John at his home in LA, where he hosted a benefit concert this week

includes Schumann and Mendelssohn, and François-Xavier Roth conducting Debussy, Bruckner and Bartók. Wigmore Hall has a "huge array" of free-to-watch archive performances, including recent concerts to commemorate Beethoven's 250th birthday. Opera North, meanwhile, has made its "acclaimed" production of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* available to stream on its website.

Now is also a good time to investigate great orchestras and performances from further afield, said Imogen Tilden. The streaming platform OperaVision.eu hosts a "wonderful" archive of Europe-wide productions, from which it curates regular themed selections – this month it has a "mini Mozart festival". Elsewhere, the Berliner Philharmoniker is "offering access to all concerts and films", both live and archived, said The New York Times. And not to be outdone, New York's Metropolitan Opera has free "nightly streams" of past productions; so far, the programme has taken in performances of everything from Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* to John Adams's *Nixon in China*.

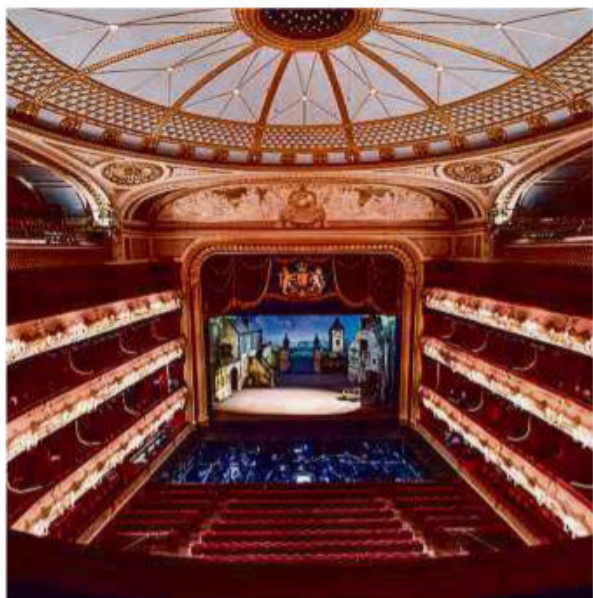
Pop music's response to the crisis has been a bit more idiosyncratic, said Gwendolyn Smith in the *I* newspaper. As if we hadn't suffered enough, celebrities from Coldplay's Chris Martin to *Wonder Woman* actress Gal Gadot have been "crooning coronavirus-themed ditties and posting them to social media". Much of this is just as "toe-curling" as you'd expect: check out U2 singer Bono's syrupy tribute to quarantined Italians singing to each other from balconies. But there is plenty to savour out there, said Stuart Jeffries in The Guardian. Musicians of all stripes are live-streaming themselves performing while in isolation. If nothing else, this offers us the chance to poke around their homes as never before: witness grizzled rocker Neil Young launching into his back catalogue "flanked by sleeping dogs and filmed by his wife, Daryl Hannah"; or the "superb" UK soul newcomer Celeste performing her

"quietly devastating songs" from "what looks like her bedroom". Conversely, musician James Blunt tweeted: "During lockdown, while many other artists are doing mini-concerts from their homes, I thought I'd do you all a favour and not."

There are opportunities for amateur singers too, said The Daily Telegraph. For instance, The Sofa Singers, hastily established by choir leader James Sills, is an "online choir" which invites up to 500 people from all over the world to sing together on video conference calls. On their first evening, they sang Ben E. King's *Stand by Me*, and Bruno Mars's *Just the Way You Are*. Some local music venues are getting in on the act, too, said Daisy Jackson in the Manchester Evening News. The much-loved Manchester bar Jimmy's, for example, is hosting a series of live-streamed "isolation gigs" featuring new and upcoming acts; any musicians are invited to book a slot via email.



Internet radio has much to offer, said Fiona Maddocks in The Observer. For instance, you could tune into Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood's appearance on Radio 3's *Late Junction*, where he shared his taste for everything from Arabic classical music to 1980s dub. And on Netflix, you'll find a "beautifully shot, Emmy-winning film" of Bruce Springsteen's famous Broadway gigs in 2018, said The Sunday Times. But YouTube is the best bet for classic gigs: check out the artist Prince's 2007 Super Bowl half-time show, which captured him "at his astounding best"; a 1976 Grateful Dead set shot in "black-and-white during a searing June heatwave"; and James Brown giving a "passionate" performance in Boston the night after Martin Luther King was killed, a concert initially broadcast to "help quell potential riots in the city". From the highbrow to the very lowbrow, the variety is endless.



The Royal Opera House: weekly spectacles

Classical and opera fans are in for a treat, said ClassicFM.com. The Royal Opera House, for instance, has fielded a star-studded "programme of online shows and masterclasses", which are now available to watch at no cost on its Facebook or YouTube channels. Viewers can watch "some of the industry's most talented ballet dancers and opera singers" performing in weekly spectacles, including Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (on 10 April at 7pm) and The Royal Ballet's *The Metamorphosis* (17 April at 7pm). There are also videos that give a glimpse of life behind the scenes at the Opera House. All performances will be available to watch on demand once they've been live-streamed.

The London Symphony Orchestra is also pulling out the stops to keep its show on the road, said Imogen Tilden in The Guardian. It is broadcasting twice weekly "full-length concerts", which are available to watch for free until midnight on the day of performance; the programme

Best TV series

The lockdown gives many of us the best excuse we've ever had to binge on TV box sets. Here are a few of the best from the past decade you might have missed.

Giri/Haji A British detective show set partly in Japan, with plenty of subtitled, Japanese dialogue and an interpretive ballet for a climax, this BBC co-production was never going to be an easy sell. But it is a thing of beauty, bursting with brilliant characters, from kimono'd mafia dons to Japanese-speaking Peckham rent boys. *On BBC iPlayer.*

Detectorists This low-key comedy focuses on the friendship between two middle-aged metal detectorists: lonely, laconic Andy (Mackenzie Crook) and puffed-up Lance (Toby Jones). The pace is snail-like, the dialogue deadpan, the comic chemistry near-perfect, and tinged with melancholy. *On BBC iPlayer.*

The Americans Created by former CIA officer Joe Weisberg, this spy thriller is about Soviet sleeper agents posing as a happily married couple (Matthew Rhys and Keri Russell) in 1980s Washington DC. Their missions to save the motherland are thrilling, but so too are their domestic struggles. *On Amazon.*

Undone From the creator of *BoJack Horseman*, *Undone* is a rotoscoped comedy-drama about a cynical young woman who finds she has extraordinary powers after a car accident. Served up in 20-minute chunks, it is unlike anything else on TV, full of hypnotic imagery beneath which lies a deep and simple human story. *On Amazon.*

Wisting Nordic noir is now a crowded subgenre, with plenty of big-hitters. Less well known – but among the strongest recent examples – is this police procedural about a widowed detective on the trail of an American serial killer. *On BBC iPlayer.*

New releases to watch at home

Vivarium

Dir: Lorcan Finnegan (1hr 38mins) (15)

★★★★

A “comic horror parable” about the stultifying effects of suburban life, director Lorcan Finnegan’s “highly entertaining” film has one “insidious” joke which it develops with “monomaniacal intensity”, said Peter Bradshaw in *The Guardian*. Our protagonists are a young couple hoping to get on the property ladder, Tom (Jesse Eisenberg) and Gemma (Imogen Poots), who are taken to visit a new housing development named Yonder by a sinister estate agent. It’s a “bizarre, *Truman Show*-esque world”, an “obviously digitalised” landscape of empty, identical houses – and when they try to leave it, they find that, for mysterious reasons, they cannot. The sky in Yonder is always bright and clear, food has no taste, and on the second day of their imprisonment, a box appears with a baby inside. “Raise the child, and be released,” reads a note on its lid.

The film is “well crafted” – but hackneyed, said Tom Shone in *The Sunday Times*. Who’d not have guessed, for instance, that the child might grow at an accelerated rate and become creepily malevolent? The premise is frankly “ridiculous”, said Kevin Maher in *The Times*, but the movie is redeemed by Poots and Eisenberg’s “effortlessly empathetic and convincing” performances. And then there is the remarkable timeliness of its release: a film about a family trapped in their own home could hardly feel more “now”. *Vivarium* has “just the right balance of drama, commentary and credibility” to make good viewing in these extraordinary times. *Available from BFI Player (player.bfi.org.uk) and other major platforms.*

The Perfect Candidate

Dir: Haifaa al-Mansour (1hr 44mins) (PG)

★★★★

In 2012, Haifaa al-Mansour became the first Saudi woman to direct a feature film. *Wadjda* told the story of a ten-year-old girl who longs to own a bicycle – and in *The Perfect Candidate*, she focuses on another “single-minded” protagonist at loggerheads with the patriarchy,



The Perfect Candidate: “richly absorbing”

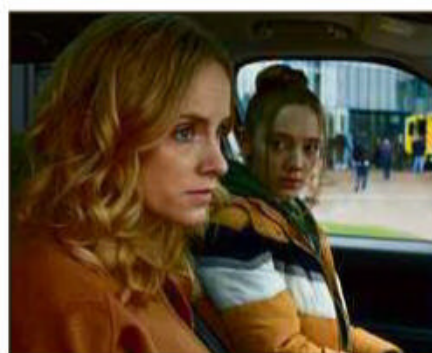
said Clarisse Loughrey in *The Independent*. Maryam (Mila al-Zahrani) is a doctor who decides to run for local government in suburban Riyadh. She doesn’t see herself as a “pioneer” – she just wants to get the dangerously muddy road outside her hospital paved – but to the people around her, only her gender is important (even her own sister whines about the scandal she’ll cause). Al-Mansour’s approach is “forthright”, like Maryam herself – and both ensure the film does not “wallow in despair”.

There are too many “rote” scenes in which “an initially faltering Maryam finds her voice and earns respect”, said Wendy Ide in *The Observer*. Still, it’s quite a kick when she “stomps into a meeting of dreadful men and douses them in shrivelling disdain”. I found a lot more than that to enjoy in this gripping and amusing film, said Robbie Collin in *The Daily Telegraph*. Al-Zahrani dextrously balances “fury” and “decorum” in her performance, and the film offers a “richly absorbing” portrait of Saudi society. *Available from BFI Player (player.bfi.org.uk), as well as Curzon Home Cinema and Modern Films.*

Also winning plaudits this week was **Togo**, Disney’s new live-action adventure about a Siberian husky which, with his owner (Willem Dafoe), made a perilous journey across the Alaskan wilderness in 1925 to deliver medicine to the diphtheria-struck residents of Nome. *Available from Disney+ (disneyplus.com).*

The Nest: a thriller about surrogacy and social class

Nicole Taylor wrote the Bafta-winning child-abuse drama *Three Girls*, said Euan Ferguson in *The Observer*. Now, she is back with the Glasgow-set *The Nest*, which promises to be both an edgy thriller and a “pointed exploration” of the rights and wrongs of surrogacy. It stars Sophie Rundle as well-heeled Emily who, having struggled for years to have a baby, asks a troubled 18-year-old named Kaya (Mirren Mack) to carry her last viable embryo, and pays her, illegally, to do so. But can she be trusted? Emily’s working-class husband (Martin Compston) is doubtful.



Rundle and Mack

Everything about Kaya “rings alarm bells”, said Anita Singh in *The Daily Telegraph*. We see her brawling with her social worker, and learn she has lied about her criminal record. It’s an “intriguing” first episode. I feel it tries to cram in rather too much, said Hugo Rifkind in *The Times*. Still, whether its about middle-class hypocrisy or working-class desperation, *The Nest* is worth a look – not

least for Mack, who is “awesome”.

For something lighter, *Feel Good* (Channel 4) is a lesbian romcom series full of “beautifully drawn” characters (FT), made by the Canadian stand-up comedian Mae Martin.



Best books... Petina Gappah

The author chooses her favourite books. Her debut story collection, *An Elegy for Easterly*, won the *Guardian First Book Award* in 2009, and her new novel, *Out of Darkness*, *Shining Light* (Faber £16.99), is out now

The Twelve Caesars by Suetonius, 121 AD; translated by Robert Graves, 1957 (Penguin £10.99). I bought my first Suetonius in a second-hand bookshop in Amsterdam, started reading it on the tram and missed my stop thanks to its gripping, dense and gossipy tabloid take on ancient Rome's greatest men.

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson, 2004 (Virago £8.99). Robinson's perfectly pitched story about three generations of a family of Congregationalist ministers is, perhaps, close to a perfect novel. A quiet and moving meditation on goodness, centring on a flawed and constantly seeking man

who finds, in a world of sorrow and loneliness, profound meaning in the gift of small wonders.

Persuasion by Jane Austen, 1818 (Oxford World's Classics £4.99). I love this deeply affecting and reflective novel about first love, regret and second chances. Like Dickens, Austen takes delight in her minor characters, who do not escape her critical eye, and in this, her last novel, every minor character is sharply drawn.

Family Life by Akhil Sharma, 2014 (Faber £7.99). When he realised that I was struggling to finish my second book, my editor gave me this to

encourage me, telling me he had waited 12 years for it. It galvanised me to finish, because the idea of making him wait that long for something I was certain would not be half as good as this beautifully narrated, shimmering and heart-breaking work was not worth thinking about.

Equus by Peter Shaffer, 1973 (Penguin £9.99). The night I first read Shaffer's masterfully unsettling playscript about buried trauma, horses galloped through my dreams. I can't think of the last time I have been so moved and shaken by a work of literature.

For out-of-print books visit biblio.co.uk

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

Programmes

Twin Tense new eight-part Norwegian drama about estranged identical twins. Surfer drop-out Erik visits his brother Adam for the first time in years, with fatal consequences. Sat 4 Apr, BBC4 21:00 and 21:45 (45mins each).

Du Fu: China's Greatest Poet Michael Wood follows in the footsteps of Du Fu, the revered eighth century poet-historian regarded as China's Shakespeare, with readings by Ian McKellen. Mon 6 Apr, BBC4 21:00 (60mins).

Return to Belsen with Jonathan Dimbleby Seventy-five years after the liberation of Belsen, Dimbleby visits the site of the death camp that his father, Richard Dimbleby, reported from in April 1945. Tue 7 Apr, ITV1 21:00 (60mins).

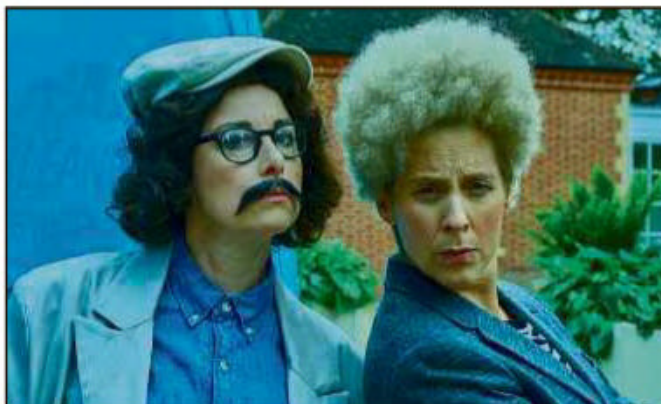
Alma's Not Normal Unflinching new comedy, written by and starring stand-up Sophie Willan as an unemployed tearaway in Bolton. Tue 7 Apr, BBC2 22:00 (30mins).

The Countess and the Billionaire Filmed over five years, this documentary follows the changing fortunes of Alexandra Tolstoy and her oligarch partner Sergei Pugachev, as they fall from grace with Putin and out of love with each other. Wed 8 Apr, BBC2 21:00 (60mins).

Films

Hail, Caesar! (2016) The Coen brothers' all-singing, all-dancing paean to 1950s Hollywood has an all-star cast led by Josh Brolin as a studio boss trying to keep his stars in line. Sat 4 Apr, Film4 16:15 (125mins).

Enough Said (2013) Bittersweet romcom starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus and James



Hitmen, on Sky One

Gandolfini as LA divorcees navigating a mid-life romance. Mon 6 Apr, C4 00:10 (5mins).

Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie (2016) Suitably silly film revival of the 1990s comedy: Patsy and Edina must flee the country after an encounter with Kate Moss goes horribly wrong. Fri 10 Apr, BBC1 22:40 (85mins).

New to subscription TV

Hitmen The first episode of this comedy starring Sue Perkins and Mel Giedroyc as unlikely assassins had mixed reviews, but *The Guardian* described it as "fun and daft". On Sky One.

The Mandalorian The much-anticipated flagship show on the new Disney+ platform is the first live-action TV series to be spun off from the *Star Wars* franchise. It follows a bounty hunter after the fall of the Empire. On Disney+.

Blinded by the Light (2019) Gurinder Chadha's feel-good drama about a young Asian man in 1980s Luton who finds escape from family pressures and racial tension in the music of Bruce Springsteen. On Amazon Prime.

The Archers: what happened last week

As Kirsty tries to distract a preoccupied Philip, Gavin rings to say the police are interviewing Blake in hospital. Phoebe tells Pip that Roy has concussion; as they discuss rewinding plans, Justin shows up and goes through their estimates, to Pip's irritation. Gavin frets that Blake won't stick to the story for the police. Philip berates Gavin for supplying the petrol – to clean the floors – that caused the explosion; he tells Gavin to lie low. Josh complains to Brian about having nothing to do since his business dried up. Brian suggests he help Adam on the farm, but an annoyed Adam refuses. After removing the first fence on the rewinding land, Rex, Phoebe and Pip celebrate at The Bull. A scared Blake tells Philip about the police interview. Philip reminds him how he got him off the streets, and presses him to stick to the false story about the petrol. Ben, Pip and Josh plan a night out in Felpersham. Kirsty tells Philip she's angry at Blake for causing the accident and damaging Philip's reputation – she'd tell him herself, but Philip warns her off. Justin tells Kirsty he doesn't want Philip's firm to carry on the work at Berrow. At home, Philip finds Kirsty searching through his company paperwork; he tells her to stop, though she's just trying to help. Robert thanks Freddie for saving Lynda and gives him his father's military medal for bravery. On the way to Felpersham, Pip's car breaks down, but a passing Joy gives Ben a lift in her two-seater; by the time Pip and Josh catch up, Ben is gone. According to Joy, he "got lucky". Ruth and Jill worry the next morning when he's not home, but his siblings cover for him. Ben later tells Josh he went home with a woman named Chloe.

Coming up online

With theatres gone dark, some are reviving past productions online: the **National Theatre** will stream landmark plays on YouTube each Thursday. Next up is *Jane Eyre*, at 7pm on 9 April (nationaltheatre.org.uk). Meanwhile, the **Royal Court's** production of David Ireland's shocking drama *Cyprus Avenue* is available online until 26 April (royalcourttheatre.com).

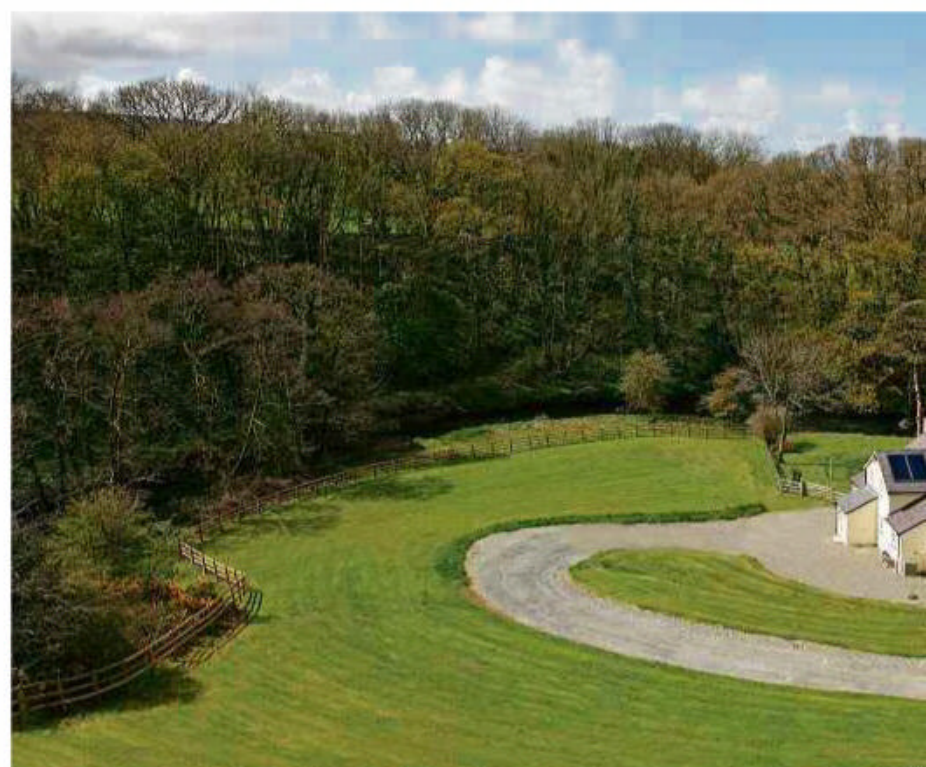
Country houses under £1m



◀ **Herefordshire:** The Woodhouse, Staplow, Ledbury. This restored and historic Grade II* medieval farmhouse, dating from 1444, is set in a small rural hamlet and has immaculate gardens and grounds extending to almost three acres with stables and paddocks. Master suite, 2 guest suites, 1 further bed, kitchen/breakfast room, 2 receps, hall, study, utility, WC, extensive gardens, patio/terrace areas, large moat, parking, 2 stables, tack/feed store, barn, double garage, paddocks. £850,000; Grant & Co (01531-637341).



▲ **Lancashire:** High Laithe, Holden, near Bolton by Bowland. A barn conversion in a beautiful setting in gardens and grounds extending to 1.5 acres with views towards Pendle Hill. Master suite, 2 guest suites, 2 further beds, family bath, kitchen/breakfast room, recep hall, 3 further receps, cloakroom, pantry, utility, garage, outbuilding, paddock. £1m; Carter Jonas (01423-582952).



◀ **Lincolnshire:** The Old Rectory, Branston. A late 18th century, Grade II Georgian period house, with mature grounds of over half an acre, in the centre of this popular village, next to the church. Master suite, guest suite, 4/5 further beds, study/bed 6, shower, kitchen/dining room, 2 further receps, garden room, music room, laundry, WC, barrel-vaulted cellar, garage, workshop/store, gardens. £650,000; Robert Bell & Company (01522-538888).





◀ **Worcestershire:** Apartment 3, 20 Besford Court Estate, Besford. An exceptional home forming part of this 16th century, Grade II* timber-framed Gothic manor house, the Besford Court Estate, which is surrounded by 35 acres of lovely grounds – including formal gardens, a communal all-weather tennis court, community hall and lots of open spaces. The house is full of Arts and Crafts features for which its architect, Albert Randall Wells, was well known, and Apartment 3 has original fireplaces and stained glass leaded windows with shutters. Master suite with walk-in wardrobe, 2 further beds, family bath, kitchen/breakfast room, vaulted sitting room, 1 further recep, hall, utility. £550,000; Fine & Country via OnTheMarket.com (01905-946902).



◀ **Pembrokeshire:** Glandwr, Nevern, near Newport. A renovated Grade II farmhouse in a wooded valley on the banks of the River Nevern, with fishing rights. The house is currently used as a 5* holiday let. 4 en-suite beds, farmhouse kitchen, utility, open-plan recep with inglenook fireplace with log burner, 1 further recep with french doors onto a patio, private garden, panoramic views. £725,000 Savills (029-2036 8915).



◀ **Oxfordshire:** The Malthouse, Shutford, Banbury. A Grade II family house dating from the 17th century, full of character with inglenook fireplaces, and set in an elevated spot. Master suite, 3 further beds, gym/bed 5, family bath, kitchen/breakfast room, garden room, 2 further receps, utility, cellars, barn with 2 offices, store and loft, vegetable garden, greenhouse, shed. £850,000; Savills (01295-228000).



◀ **Fife:** Dura House, Pitscottie, Cupar. A B-listed Scots baronial country house in a wooded setting close to St Andrews. The house, which dates from the 18th century, was upgraded in the 1970s but now requires refurbishment. Master suite, 8 further beds, 2 baths, kitchen/breakfast room, recep hall, 2 further receps, office, boot room, ballroom, library, laundry, outbuildings with garage and workshop, grounds of 8.7 acres. £875,000; Savills (0131-247 3738).



▲ **North Yorkshire:** Aldwark, York. A beautiful family home, set over three floors, in the heart of this popular village. Master suite with walk-in wardrobe, guest suite, 4 further beds, family bath, kitchen/dining room, 2 further receps, office, utility, hall, double garage, garden, outside boot room, electric gates. £850,000; Hunters (01347-823535).



DNW Sales Schedule April to June 2020

Coins, Tokens and Historical Medals
8 April

Orders, Decorations, Medals and Militaria
16 April

Coins
22 April

Coins
6 May

Tokens and Historical Medals
20 May

Orders, Decorations, Medals and Militaria
21 May

Ancient & Islamic Coins
3 June

**Jewellery, Watches, Antiquities
& Objects of Vertu**
9 June

British, Irish and World Banknotes
24 June



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A word from **Dix Noonan Webb Auctioneers**

With many auction houses cancelling their sales in response to the **Covid-19** crisis, we are pleased to confirm our auction calendar for sales of **JEWELLERY, COINS, MEDALS AND BANKNOTES** will not only continue, but increase. We have been experiencing unprecedented levels of activity on our website in recent weeks, with our buyers having more time on their hands than usual. A shortage of goods on the market aided by record gold prices is already feeding into high prices at auction.



Buying online at auction is fast becoming the new norm. Our exceptional in-house auction technology systems and bidding platform enables us to continue our auctions with the minimum of disruption during these unprecedented times.

All our electronic catalogues are available to view and download on our website, with high definition images and condition reports for every lot offered. We hope our increased sales programme will provide a source of interest and pleasure to our clients during this temporary period of uncertainty. Please see our website for **PREVIEWS** of forthcoming auctions.

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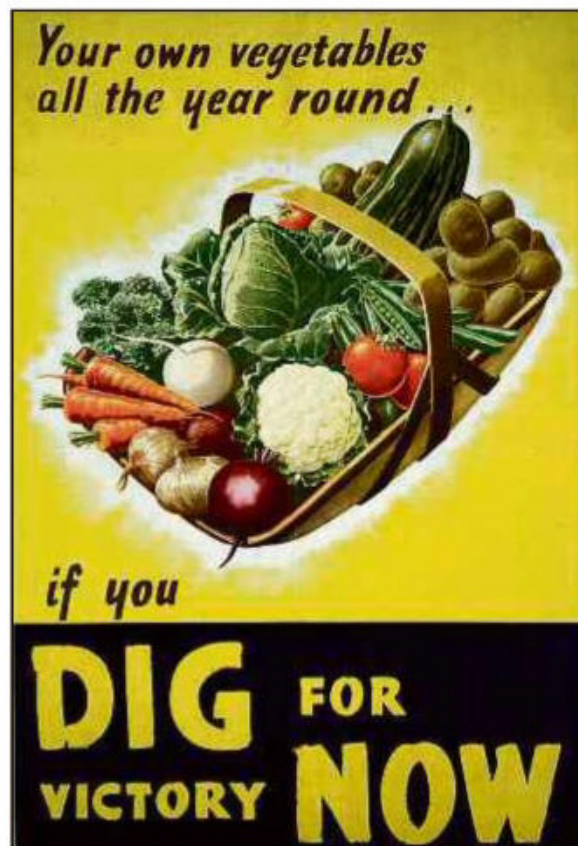
All illustrated lots are included in forthcoming sales

Dig for victory over the virus

When I started Tim Lang's new book *Feeding Britain*, it struck me as "alarmist and off-beam", says Simon Jenkins in *The Sunday Times*. Not so much now. In it, the farmer-turned-academic warns that we are risking a crisis of food insecurity, and urges Britain to revert to a wartime siege economy for food. It's crazy, he argues, that we're reliant on imports for half of our supplies – including 87% of fruit and vegetables – the arrival of which depends on "hyper-fragile" transnational distribution systems. The declining quality of our food is another problem – as is the amount we waste. Faced with all manner of threats, from "cyberaggression" to disease, we must, he says, start digging for victory. A few weeks ago, the idea of sending Britain back to the 1940s seemed a bit preposterous. But the impact of the coronavirus – on retailers, supply chains and farmers (who warned last week that owing to quarantining, they'll struggle to get the harvest in) – has put a different complexion on things. Lang's book is not flawless: it suffers from "bouts of acute think tank-itis. But it is rich in ideas and astonishingly timely. *Feeding Britain: Our Food Problems and How to Fix Them*, Pelican £25.

Onions are not the only vegetable

With people stocking up on essentials, onions have become hard to get hold of. But do not despair: some well known chefs have recommended ways of doing without, said Bob Granleese in *The Guardian*. For recipes that kick off with softened onions,



Harking back to wartime allotments

to bring body and sweetness, you can "bridge the gap with chopped celery, fennel or bell pepper", said Jacob Kenedy (of Bocca Di Lupo). "And a little sugar, for that sweet hit." For browned onions, which add savoury complexity, try a little anchovy, ginger or cumin. There is nothing that replicates onion exactly, said chef Merlin Labron-Johnson. But celery and celeriac both add "body and depth" to soups and stews. Celery's "subtle, earthy perfume" goes with all sorts – meat, fish and other vegetables too – making it very versatile. For vegetable-based dishes,

Karam Sethi (of Gymkhana) suggests a combination of tomato, ginger and coriander seeds; and in meat marinades, ginger powder and fresh coriander: "Use the stalks and roots, too, for pity's sake – they're absolutely packed with flavour."

The joy of tins

We turn to tinned food in a crisis – and the concept was born of one, says Michael Odell in *The Times*. In 1800, Napoleon put up a prize for anyone who could find a new way of preserving food for his soldiers marching on Russia. The winner was Nicolas Appert, who managed to get a "whole sheep into a glass jar, cook it and seal it with a cork stopper". Ten years later a British merchant, Peter Durand, adapted the idea, squeezing 30lbs of meat into a metal container, which he sealed with cement. Today, tinned food is vacuum-sealed and heated to destroy the potentially lethal *Clostridium botulinum* bacterium. Water-soluble vitamins C and B1 can be lost in this process, but the fat-soluble A, D, E and K survive well. And tinned tomatoes, for example, are actually higher than fresh in the antioxidant lycopene. My top tinned tip: chickpea curry.

Alcohol anxiety

A rush on wine has left supermarket stocks low in some places – but the Government bowed to industry pressure last week, and granted off-licences a last-minute exemption to lockdown rules. You might also be able to support your local wine bars and restaurants by buying from them: many are applying for temporary off-licences.

Bali banana pancakes

I first tried these pancakes years ago in Bali, says Elly McCausland. With chunks of ripe banana, they will bring some feel-good Indonesian magic to your kitchen. For a slightly sharper sweetness, use slices of pineapple instead of banana

Serves 4

150g plain flour 1 egg 300ml milk (whole or semi-skimmed works best) a pinch of salt ¼ tsp ground cinnamon 1 tbsp melted butter, plus extra for cooking 4 tsp light muscovado sugar 2 large bananas (not too ripe), sliced on the diagonal as thinly as possible (about 3mm) 4 tbsp desiccated coconut maple or coconut syrup, to serve

- You need a good non-stick pan of the correct size (about 20cm diameter) for this recipe, otherwise it will be difficult to set the bananas in the pancake. Don't use bananas that are too ripe, or they will be difficult to slice thinly.

- Sift the flour into a large bowl. Make a well in the centre and crack in the egg. Pour in a little of the milk, then whisk the egg and milk, incorporating a little more of the flour with each whisk, adding more milk gradually until you have a batter. Whisk in the salt, cinnamon and melted butter.

- Heat a medium non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add a knob of butter and swirl it around the pan. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon of the sugar over the base of the pan, then arrange a quarter of the banana slices over the



base of the pan (you can do this in concentric circles if you're feeling stylish, or just scatter them). Cook for 2-3 minutes, until the bananas start to caramelise (check by lifting up one of the slices with the tip of a knife), then scatter over a quarter of the coconut and cook for another minute.

- Pour over a quarter of the pancake batter and tip the pan gently to cover the banana pieces and coconut evenly. Cook for 2-3 minutes, until the batter is almost set, then flip over the pancake carefully using a palette knife or spatula, and cook for another 1-2 minutes, until golden.

- Keep the pancake warm in a low oven while you repeat to make the remaining three pancakes. Serve warm with maple or coconut syrup.

Taken from The Botanical Kitchen by Elly McCausland, published by Bloomsbury Absolute at £26.

New cars: what the critics say



Renault Captur
from £17,595

What Car?

The original Renault Captur, released in 2013, was not the first small SUV to hit the market. But it did ride the “tsunami” of their popularity, and since then, 1.2 million Captur’s have been sold worldwide. The secret to its appeal was its “distinctive looks” and lots of customisation options – and Renault has been even “bolder” with this model. But while it remains keenly priced, the “funky” design doesn’t quite make up for some disappointing engines.

The Daily Telegraph

It’s a bit odd that these “hatchbacks on stilts” have proved so popular; “as a rule, the taller the car, the stiffer the suspension must be to stop it leaning over”. Increased aerodynamic drag makes them less economical too. Still, this one has some great design touches. The keyless entry system feels “slick” – unlocking the car as you walk up to it. There’s “bags of space” inside, and the boot can be made vast thanks to a sliding back bench.

Auto Express

There are six engines on offer, ranging from a 99bhp 1.0-litre petrol, which feels “every bit as pedestrian as its 13.3-second 0-62mph figure suggests”. At the top of the range, the 153bhp 1.3-litre is much more capable. There’s a fair amount of body lean around corners, but the pay-off for that is a comfortable ride. Based on the new Clio, the car drives well, with precise steering. Overall, it has the ingredients to be another “sales success”.

The best... bath toys for small children



► **Kitpas bath crayon set** These clever crayons, which write on the sides of your bath, should wipe off without much elbow grease. They float, and are suitable for ages three and above (£8 for three, or £19 for the full set; kidly.co.uk).

► **Colourful Creatures Bath Book**

Introduce children early to the pleasures of reading in the bath with this waterproof book. It’s light and squishy, and features eight colourful and charming animal illustrations (£5; rexlondon.com).

► **Mermaid bath fizzer**

This fun bath bomb keeps children in suspense while they wait to see what is inside the fizzing seashell. It only works once, but they can keep the mermaid once it has been released. For children over three (£4; rexlondon.com).

▲ **Zoo Bath Fill Up Bee Fountain**

Great for babies aged nine months or older, this simple bee toy turns into an umbrella-shaped fountain when you submerge it in the water and then lift it out (£10; skiphop.co.uk).

◀ **Battat bath bar**

Designed to teach toddlers about water flow, this activity bar attaches to the bath with suction cups. Curious children can make the sun spin using droplets from the cloud, or squirt water by squeezing the bee (£20; argos.co.uk).

Tips of the week... working out using household items

- Create a makeshift kettlebell by putting a few 1kg bags of things like flour and sugar in a strong plastic bag. Tie it tightly so the items won’t shift around. Then put this in another bag that you can swing from the handles. Look for kettlebell workouts online.
- Tie a jacket made of strong material around a post or other fixed structure. Pull back on it until you are holding your body weight, and use it as you would TRX bands or suspension rings in a gym.
- One-litre bottles of water make great small dumbbells. Try holding one in each hand while doing squats. As you stand up, push them into the air above your head, and bring them down above your shoulders as you come down.
- Children may well be the heaviest “items” around your house that you can lift. Use them as heavier weights, for example by squatting with them on your back. Use the weight you might lift at the gym as a guide, and be careful.

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN

And for those who have everything...



If you’re planning to spend lots of time in your garden over the coming weeks, treat yourself to some designer gardening tools. This Orte set designed by Giulio Iacchetti for Internoitaliano is made of polished metal and is presented in a wooden base.

€168; internoitaliano.com

SOURCE: FINANCIAL TIMES

Apps... for learning a language

Babbel offers short 15-minute lessons which use audio and visual clues to help you learn the basics, and include some cultural background (free trial, from £4.75 a month; Android, iOS).

Probably the best-known language app, **Duolingo** lets you set targets for how intensively you want to learn, starting from five minutes a day. It works like a game with lots of visual clues (free; Android, iOS).

Memrise, as its name suggests, focuses on repetition to aid memorisation. You practise specific words and phrases at a time, linked by a topic area (free; Android, iOS).

Rosetta Stone has been at the forefront of language software for years. Its app aims to teach you to speak like a native, without reference to your own language (from £7 a month; Android, iOS).

Tandem connects you with people from around the world that you can talk to either by text or voice chat to help you both learn each other’s language (free; Android; iOS).

SOURCE: TECH ADVISOR

Brilliant illustrator who created Asterix the Gaul

Albert Uderzo
1927-2020

As a child, Albert Uderzo did not seem destined to become an illustrator. He was born colour-blind, and with six fingers on each hand. Even after the extra digits had been removed, he could only grasp a pencil awkwardly, between his third and fourth fingers, said *The Times*. Yet he grew up to draw one of the most famous illustrated characters of all time: the indomitable Asterix the Gaul. Created with the great René Goscinny, who wrote the books until his death in 1977, the stories about Gaulish villagers resisting and outwitting the Roman invaders in 50BC have delighted readers all over the world.

The *Asterix* books have been translated into 111 languages and dialects, and have sold some 380 million copies. In France, though, Asterix and his comrades are more than just well-loved characters: they have come to be seen as symbols of French patriotism and fighting spirit. It was typical that after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in 2015, Uderzo came out of retirement to produce two pencil drawings: one of Asterix furiously exclaiming “*Moi aussi, je suis un Charlie*”; a second, arguably more powerful, of Asterix and Obelix with their heads bowed in mourning. For Uderzo, the diminutive Gaulish warrior, made invincible by the druid’s magic potion, was there to give succour to life’s underdogs. “[Asterix] stands for the revenge of the little guy,” he said. “Everyone feels put upon by forces which are more powerful than the individual. Whether it’s the Romans, the king, the president of the republic, the police... one may be little; one still has to fight back.”

Something of an underdog himself, he was born in northern France, the son of poor Italian immigrant parents. He loved comics as a child (he bought the first issue of Mickey Mouse magazine, but preferred Popeye – who derived his power from spinach). His mother and his older brother Bruno encouraged his talent for drawing; in his youth, he also worked with Bruno on a farm in Brittany, which would inspire the rural backgrounds for the *Asterix* books. His career as a cartoonist began at Editions du Chêne; later, he moved to World Press where, in the early 1950s,



Uderzo: champion of the underdog

he met Goscinny – who had already created *Lucky Luke*, and would go on to write *Le Petit Nicolas*. The two became collaborators and firm friends. They created first a character called Oumpah-pah; then devised Asterix in 1959 for a magazine called *Pilote*, said *The Guardian*. Remembering learning about the chieftain Vercingetorix at school, they decided the Gauls would have names ending in “ix”, and the Romans in “us”. The first book, *Asterix the Gaul*, sold a modest 6,000 copies in its first run. But by 1965, Asterix had such a hold on the country’s imagination, the first French space satellite was named after him. The initial print run for the tenth book, *Asterix the Legionary*, in 1967, was a million copies.

There was a great energy to Uderzo’s drawings, as well as witty detail: his Roman buildings are remarkably accurate; even minor characters are expressively realised; and in the background of the strips, there is always

bustling activity – diners feasting on wild boars, chariots snarled up in traffic – to help bring Asterix’s world to life. Goscinny was a master of clever word play and cultural allusion (ingeniously preserved and sometimes enhanced in the English translation by Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge), while Uderzo introduced visual jokes and references, said *The Daily Telegraph*. In *Asterix the Gladiator*, a muscular slave “adopts the poses of the *Laocoön* and Rodin’s *Thinker*”; elsewhere a bunch of pirates on a raft are a cartoon version of Géricault’s *The Raft of the Medusa*. Four mop-topped bards are mobbed by admirers in *Asterix in Britain*; and Jacques Chirac, then mayor of Paris, makes a cameo in *Obelix and Co.*, as a devious young Roman called Preposterus.

When Goscinny died of a heart attack aged 51, Uderzo was loath to continue; but his publisher forced him to finish the book they’d been working on, *Asterix in Belgium*, and fans begged for more. He obliged. The first two, *The Great Divide* and *The Black Gold*, were worthy of the originals; later books had “sillier premises” and less clever jokes. Yet they continued to resonate: last week, fans rejoiced in circulating a strip from 2011, in which the pair defeat a masked charioteer by the name of Coronavirus.

American folk singer known as the UK’s Joan Baez

Julie Felix
1938-2020

Julie Felix, who has died aged 81, was a young singer performing in folk clubs in London in the mid-1960s when a chance encounter with David Frost led to her appearing on *The Frost Report*, said *The Daily Telegraph*. Audiences were so enchanted, she ended up hosting two TV series of her own (one of which was the first on BBC2 in colour), which did much to bring folk to a mass audience. Meanwhile, she mixed with The Beatles, gave a series of concerts with Georgie Fame (supported by Cat Stevens), and sold out the Albert Hall. Such was her popularity, she was referred to as the UK’s Joan Baez – though she was, in fact, American.

Felix was born in Santa Barbara, California, to Lorenzo Felix, a mariachi musician, and his wife Doris, who had Welsh ancestry. Although Julie loved music, she never intended to make a career of it, but in 1962, she decided to embark on a beatnik adventure to Europe – and took her guitar with her. She befriended Leonard Cohen on the Greek island of Hydra, before he had even started writing songs; and arrived in



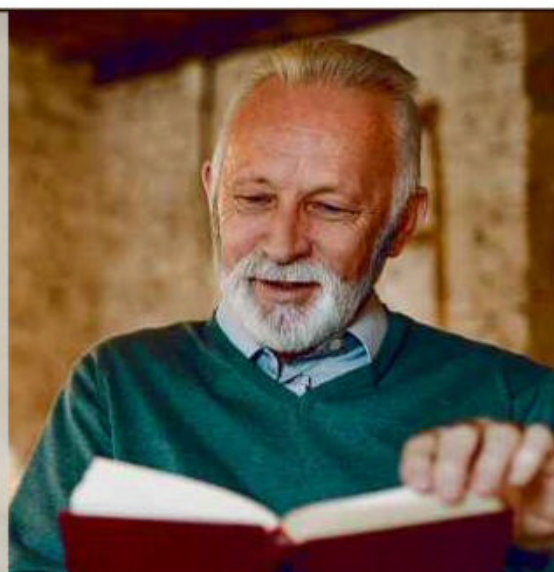
Felix: folk ambassador

London in 1964. She was signed by Decca on the strength of a tape of her singing; her debut album included covers of Woody Guthrie and early Bob Dylan songs. She met David Frost in the lift of the apartment block in Chelsea where they both lived. Having featured her on his own show, he persuaded the BBC to commission *Once More with Felix*, from 1967; it was followed by *The Julie Felix Show*. Cohen made his British TV debut on her show: they performed *Hey That’s No Way to Say Goodbye* together. Other guests included Donovan, Dusty Springfield and Jimmy Page, said *The Guardian* – but her favourite was Spike Milligan.

Independent-minded and political, Felix did not relish pop fame, and in 1971, she moved to Norway with her daughter. She had already worked for Christian Aid in Africa and – now back in the US – developed an interest in spiritualism. She moved back to Britain in the 1990s. She remained close to Cohen until his death, and at a concert in London to celebrate her 80th birthday in 2018, her old friend John Paul Jones, of Led Zeppelin, was among the guests.

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Companies in the news ...and how they were assessed

UK grocers: breaking records



At the start of the year, when Britain's grocers were taking stock of a pretty average Christmas, no one foresaw the trauma – and the bonanza – ahead. Suffice it to say that “panic-buying shoppers” have made March “the busiest month on record for supermarkets across the UK”, said Kit Heren in the London Evening Standard. Sales jumped by 20.6% over four weeks, according to market researcher Kantar, as customers bent on stocking up before the lockdown “made an extra 42 million visits to supermarkets” in just four days. Overall,

the nation shelled out £10.8bn on groceries in March – “even higher than levels seen at Christmas”. Booze sales jumped 22% to £200m; sales of store-cupboard ingredients rose by 28%. And with pubs and restaurants closed for the foreseeable future, the gravy train looks set to continue. All the more so because supermarkets are also “in line for a £3bn tax break”, said Philip Aldrick in The Times. All retailers have been granted a one-year exemption from business rates in the Chancellor's economic rescue package, but groups like Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda “will be some of the biggest beneficiaries”. That should help offset the cost of revving up online delivery and click-and-collect services to cope with the surge. No wonder they come garnished with analyst “buy” recommendations.

EasyJet: Stelios erupts

Grounding the entire fleet was “the easy bit for easyJet”, said Nils Pratley in The Guardian. “Now comes the tricky task of negotiating in public” with founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou “who, metaphorically speaking, is threatening to storm the cockpit and take hostages”. Haji-Ioannou wants the airline, of which he and his siblings retain a 34% stake, to torch a multibillion-pound order for 107 Airbus planes as a matter of urgency. And he's demanding shareholders “fire one easyJet non-executive director every seven weeks” until he gets what he wants. At a simple level, Stelios makes a fair point about the order being the “largest single threat” to the airline's solvency. But does it have to be so all or nothing? Surely there's flexibility to stagger, trim or delay the contract? You'd think so, said Alistair Osborne in The Times. Sadly, “just the thought of the new planes” has sent him “into full Eyjafjallajökull volcano mode” – we're witnessing “the sort of eruption not seen from Mount Stelios for a decade”. Too many planes has long been one of the founder's favourite grouches (though he tends to go “mysteriously quiet” when shares are rising). “Covid-19 has clearly returned him to financial crisis-style panic.”

Virgin: stir it up

Over at Virgin Atlantic, Sir Richard Branson has come up trumps, said Lex in the FT. Criticised at the start of the crisis for asking staff to take eight weeks' unpaid leave “to save costs”, Branson has now pledged to inject \$250m into his Virgin empire – with most of it going to the airline. Call it a sticking plaster, said LaToya Harding in The Daily Telegraph. Chancellor Rishi Sunak might have ruled out a sector-wide government rescue of UK-based airlines, but Virgin will be among the first seeking aid on a “last resort” case-by-case basis. The airline is reportedly “looking for a package of commercial loans and guarantees” to help it battle the crisis. Success would doubtless galvanise other carriers, including easyJet, Loganair and Eastern Airways, which may also be “mulling” a decision to request government funds. When it comes to stirring things up, Virgin is proving equally adept Down Under, said Patrick Hatch in The Sydney Morning Herald. The “debt-laden, loss-making” Virgin Australia (Australia's second-largest carrier) has written to Scott Morrison's government requesting a A\$1.4bn emergency loan. Having previously declared itself in good enough shape to survive unaided, the larger Qantas is now demanding A\$4.2bn “to level the playing field”. Talk about aid inflation.

Uber/Airbnb/WeWork: that isolated feeling

“Until just a few weeks ago, the so-called sharing economy looked like the future,” said Olivia Rudgard in The Sunday Telegraph. But the old disruptors are crumbling under the weight of the pandemic. “The likes of Airbnb and Uber have seen their business plummet during the outbreak.” And things aren't looking too pretty at WeWork, either. Even before the virus struck, the office-space firm was “struggling”, said Hilary Osborne in The Observer. Now it faces the hefty cost of maintaining long leases on its properties, while customers cancel short-term space contracts. News that WeWork's chief sugar daddy, the Japanese tech investor SoftBank, may walk away from a \$3.3bn investment could prove the final straw. No wonder WeWorkers slammed the move as “unethical”.

Seven days in the Square Mile

Global stock markets bounced back strongly in response to the wall of firepower deployed by central banks to calm the system – Wall Street enjoyed one of its biggest weekly rebounds since the aftermath of the 1929 crash. But investors, struggling to adapt to a rapidly shrinking global economy, were still counting the cost of a bruising quarter. The **FTSE 100** fell 26% in Q1 2020 – its worst performance since 1987, the **pound** slid to a 35-year low, and the price of **oil** fell so precipitously that some analysts predicted it could turn “negative”. One of the early casualties of the virus, **Singapore**, revealed that its GDP contracted by 10.6% in the quarter.

As Britain steeled itself for what one fund manager described as a period of “corporate Darwinism on steroids”, economists at investment bank Nomura forecast that **unemployment** is set to double in the coming months: from 3.9% in January to 8% in the April-June quarter – the equivalent of 1.4 million lost jobs. Insurers were reported to be tightening their terms on business to exclude disruption due to coronavirus.

BrightHouse, the household goods rent-to-own group, and the Italian dining chain **Carluccio's** went into administration, blaming “challenging” conditions exacerbated by the virus.

Johnson & Johnson announced it might be able to get a vaccine into testing in September. **M&S** joined **Sainsbury's** and **Tesco** in rewarding workers with 10-15% bonuses. Bosses at building chain **Taylor Wimpey** became the latest to take a pay cut: volunteering for a 30% reduction while the lockdown lasts.

Slack'n'Zoom

The onslaught of “online offices” and “virtual water coolers” has proved a game-changer for companies such as Slack, said Danny Fortson in The Sunday Times. The \$16bn workplace messaging service reports it has signed up 9,000 new accounts in the past three weeks – “nearly equal to the 10,000 it signed in the preceding six months”. Shares in the other big tech winner, Zoom Video, have jumped by 30%. The latter is proving strangely compulsive, one nosey banker told the Financial Times. “What I love [on Zoom calls] is looking at people's bookcases – the amount of John Grisham they have on there. And these are educated people!”

Can China get us out of this mess... again?

Editorial

Financial Times

“The economic fallout from the pandemic is starting to feel like 2008 reprised,” says the FT. Once again, all eyes are on China, the hope being that the country can revive the world economy. But although China “appears on track to stage the first recovery among leading economies”, the “unpalatable reality” is that it will be impossible to replicate 2008. Then, Beijing “led the world to growth by pushing out a massive \$590bn stimulus package” equivalent to 13% of its GDP. However, it has run up so much debt in the credit-fuelled 12 years since that crisis, it can ill-afford another big bazooka. “Nor does it appear as willing as it was in 2008 to identify the world’s problems as its own.” But if a credit bazooka really is out of the question, China should not hesitate to pull other available levers. If it wants to show “real leadership”, it should “ramp up imports while keeping the renminbi steady against the dollar”. The resulting “hefty current account deficits” would help revive global demand and offer conclusive proof of China’s “contribution to the international community”.

Trust is being tested to destruction

Luke Johnson

The Sunday Times

Britain’s business community may have been “too complacent” before the coronavirus hit, says Luke Johnson, but now companies and entrepreneurs are stretching “every sinew” to stay afloat. They’re “scrabbling for cash in every corner”: all bank facilities have been drawn down. Yet “few I know want to borrow via the various emergency government loan schemes”, because “personal guarantees” are required, and no one really knows what anything is worth right now, nor how debt is to be repaid “once this agony is over”. Some companies are making emergency cash-calls to shareholders. And even FTSE 100 companies are ignoring banking covenants – something that before now firms were far too petrified to contemplate. That perhaps is the most striking measure of how “whole industries are on life support”. In a “sophisticated economy”, commercial relationships depend on a “high degree of trust and properly functioning rule of law”. That is now going to be tested to destruction. Once the shock wears off, “I fear an avalanche of litigation – contracts broken, debts unpaid, everyone looking to blame and claim from someone else”.

Is Britain at the back of the vaccine queue?

Hannah Uttley

The Sunday Telegraph

When plans to build Britain’s first vaccine manufacturing innovation centre were revealed in 2018, no one could have foreseen the global pandemic just around the corner, says Hannah Uttley. And that facility won’t be ready until 2022, raising fears that – without a major cash injection – Britain will be at the back of the international queue for vaccines. Some 35 companies around the world are now thought to have clinical trials of coronavirus vaccines in the pipeline, and several labs hope to have a product “ready to be put forward to regulators” by the end of the year. But it’s not just a question of coming up with a vaccine that can work. As one investment banker points out, we also need the building and manufacturing capacity to handle it. Our home-grown pharma giant, GlaxoSmithKline – one of the world’s biggest vaccine-makers – doesn’t manufacture immunisations in this country, so Britain currently has just two major vaccine factories, both near Liverpool, run by AstraZeneca and Seqirus. One crystal clear message this pandemic sends out is simply this: Britain must invest more. “Coronaviruses aren’t going away.”

Give credit to the nation’s favourite villain

Alistair Osborne

The Times

Sports Direct boss Mike Ashley has a nice new line in “sack-cloth”, says Alistair Osborne. Having outraged the nation by ignoring government advice to shut stores, while “jacking up” prices on home gym kit by as much as 50%, he has issued a “mea culpa”. It’s easy to be cynical about the “carefully worded apology” that “big Mike” relayed across the stock exchange, and his pledge “not to make the same mistakes” in future – he was probably keen to avoid a repeat of being “dragged up in front of a parliamentary committee to be grilled on working conditions” at the group’s warehouses. Still, actions speak louder than words. To his credit, Ashley has offered to put his Frasers Group’s “entire fleet of lorries” at the “disposal” of the NHS and “all key workforces across the government”, to help deliver medical equipment and other supplies. “As long as he’s not intending to charge royally for his services, it’s a decent gesture.” For now, the nation’s favourite corporate villain “deserves the benefit of the doubt”.

City profiles

Laxman Narasimhan

Lots of us are getting used to running our business empires from home. Few are quite the size of Laxman Narasimhan’s, said The Times. The new Reckitt Benckiser boss was relocating to Britain when the crisis hit – and has since been running “one of the world’s biggest consumer goods companies” from his two-bed home in west London, “while also looking after his 79-year-old mother”. His wife and children are “trapped” in New York. Indian-born Narasimhan joined Reckitt from Pepsico last summer, “partly because he had an affinity” with one of its leading brands, Dettol – a staple of his childhood. Sales of the disinfectant have, unsurprisingly, soared.

Bill Ackman



Less than a week after warning the American public that “hell is coming”, the billionaire investor behind Pershing Square has controversially pocketed \$2.6bn – after taking big bets that firms would struggle to pay their debts, said Ortenca Aliaj in the FT. In an “emotional” interview, the hedgeie, 53, recalled how “he had become increasingly bearish in January, after waking up from a nightmare about the virus”. His hunch paid off when some timely “credit protection trades” protected Pershing’s \$6.5bn portfolio from “the US stock market’s fastest-ever bear market”. Ackman’s coup tops a triumphant turnaround after “four consecutive years of losses”. Optimists note that, in line with President Trump, he’s now betting heavily on US recovery, ploughing much of the windfall into shares of American companies “we love” at “bargain prices”.

Issue of the week: rebooting the world

With more than 80 countries already queuing for IMF assistance, the global economy is in uncharted waters

“Governments and investors woke up far too late to the current crisis,” said Richard Partington and Graeme Wearden in *The Observer*. “Now they face the prospect of the deepest recession in history.” For the global financial system, a month of “unprecedented pandemonium” has threatened to bring Western capitalism to its knees, despite the interventions of central banks. “This is a generation-defining moment,” said Mohamed El-Erian of insurance giant Allianz. “I’ve never seen an economic stop on this scale, certainly never in big countries and all at once.”



Oil crisis: demand has fallen by a quarter

There have been a few encouraging signs this week: notably, an increase in China’s manufacturing activity. Indeed, a partial rebound in stock markets over the past week “signals that some investors believe the worst of the financial market impacts of the pandemic are over”, said Stephen Bartholomeusz in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. But although “the level of monetary and fiscal stimulus is far greater and has been implemented far earlier than the responses to the financial crisis in 2008”, the elusive “bottom” may still not yet be in sight. Certainly, the mood elsewhere isn’t optimistic. Copper, regarded as one of the best indicators of economic activity, is 25% off its January peak. And oil prices have been smashed to below \$20 a barrel. While that plunge partly reflects a glut of supply, “it’s the

demand side that is most significant” – demand has fallen by more than 25 million barrels a day, or about a quarter of normal global demand. Indeed, the threat now, according to Goldman Sachs, is that “oil prices could turn negative” if huge oversupply means producers have “to pay to get rid of their oil”, said Ed Clowes in *The Daily Telegraph*. The impact on troubled producers like Iran – one of more than 80 countries now seeking financial help from the IMF – could be devastating.

Poorer nations, whacked by the collapse of commodity prices and capital flight, have been particularly hard hit. But even richer countries, like Britain, should prepare for hard times ahead, said Andrew Verity on BBC Business. Despite unprecedented government support, “a fifth of smaller UK firms” could “run out of cash” after just a four-week lockdown, according to the Corporate Finance Network – because cash isn’t getting through via the banks. “Each morning, we awake to a surreal world of inactivity and uncertainty, the like of which is beyond all previous experience,” said Jeremy Warner in *The Sunday Telegraph*. “If the shutdown goes on for no more than three months, then the economy ought to emerge on the other side just about operationally intact and capable of a strong bounce-back.” That’s the best-case scenario. “If it is six months, then all bets are off.”

Taming the banks: what the experts think

● Poor judgement?

“Jes Staley has made some decent strategic calls at Barclays,” said Alistair Osborne in *The Times*. But when it comes to “personal decisions”, he repeatedly gets it wrong. At a time when customers’ businesses have been “pole-axed” by the coronavirus, Staley is pocketing a £395,000 cash bonus. “What sort of judgement call is that?” The dole-out had the effect of highlighting another “delicate issue” for Barclays: namely, its “ill-judged” insistence on continuing with a planned £1.03bn dividend payment to investors – even though credit-strapped companies are crying out for the cash. Fortunately, the bank has been saved from its own folly. Following pressure from regulators, all of Britain’s largest lenders have now agreed to cancel their dividends – freeing up a combined £7.5bn.



Jes Staley: a £395,000 bonus

failures and job losses” and complaints from “frustrated borrowers” had clearly rattled the authorities. Given the rancour about the sector’s bailout after the 2008 crash, no one wants “grumbles about foot-dragging lenders” to become “a running subplot” of this crisis. “If the economic damage turns out to be slighter than feared”, the dividends could always be “reinstated”. In the

meantime, preserving bank capital would create “confidence” that the economy can rebound after the lockdown.

● Tough love

Lenders in Britain have been expecting “a tougher approach” since the European Central Bank ordered eurozone banks to freeze dividends and share buybacks last week, said the FT. The Bank of England was able to rely on “moral suasion”, rather than “diktat”. Still, the move will prove unpopular with some investors, especially retail shareholders who rely on the payout for their income. That may not be the end of it either. The Prudential Regulation Authority has also written to UK insurers asking them “to pay close attention to the need to protect policyholders” when making decisions on shareholder payouts and staff bonuses.

● Doing the right thing

Right call, said Nils Pratley in *The Guardian*. The most urgent problem in British banking, from the point of view of protecting the economy, is the pace at which banks are “converting the Government’s £330bn support package into hard cash” for British companies. “Speed matters when trying to minimise

Property matters

Houses: frozen “An Englishman’s home was once his castle,” said Lex in the FT. “It is now his open prison.” All the more so since the property market was effectively “shut down” this week. Banks are withdrawing mortgages; homes will no longer be advertised; housebuilders have “mostly downed tools”. The move was inevitable given collapsing transactions: Zoopla reported that the number of “sales falling through” rose by 60% in mid-March. The question every homeowner wants to ask is: what will happen to prices? Technically, “not a lot” while the lockdown continues. In the longer term, like much else, it all depends on the extent of the economic fall-out.

Shops: rent strikes In much of the commercial property market, meanwhile, anarchy rules, said Ben Chapman in *The Independent*. “Hundreds of retailers” simply “stopped paying rent” when the Government promised they wouldn’t “forfeit their leases” if they chose to delay payments. That meant an immediate nightmare for already imperilled landlords, like shopping-centre “expert” Intu. Thanks to the “rent strike”, the company received just 29% of the rent it was due in the last quarter and, like many other landlords, is “struggling to cover the cost of its property loans”. Meanwhile, the number of big name refuseniks continues to mount: JD Sports, Burger King and Dunelm have all joined the strike.

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Who's tipping what

The week's best shares

CMC Markets

The Sunday Telegraph

The spread-better and trading firm has been capturing twice the normal volume of client trading activity, notes Peel Hunt, with an extra £15m revenue in March boosting profits by £10m. Investing heavily in tech. Buy. 165.6p.

Codemasters Group

Investors Chronicle

This video-games developer majors on car-racing – promising licences include Formula 1. Could face disruption, but should benefit from surging demand for streamed products. Margins are up 89%. Buy. 215p.

Diageo

The Daily Telegraph

The drinks group is holding up well, thanks to long-established brands including Smirnoff, Johnnie Walker and Baileys. A strong stable of labels enjoying generation-spanning support around the world. Buy. £22.16.

Hollywood Bowl Group

The Mail on Sunday

Shares in Britain's biggest bowling operator have been overly savaged. Well-managed – sales, profits and dividends were all rising before the hiatus. Directors have shown faith by buying more than 30,000 shares. Buy. 153p.

Real Estate Investors

The Mail on Sunday

This “highly conservative”, Midlands-based property firm is financially strong, with a spread of tenants including NHS and government offices. The portfolio is 96% let and the Midlands is “forging ahead”. Buy. 34p.

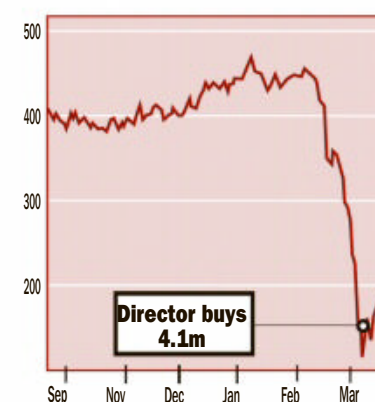
Yourgene Health

The Mail on Sunday

The diagnostics specialist usually focuses on tests for Down's Syndrome, cystic fibrosis and male infertility, but is diverting resources to make Covid-19 testing kits. A well-regarded industry pioneer. Buy. 14.5p

Directors' dealings

IWG



The global work-from-home experiment could dampen demand for IWG's co-working spaces. But CEO Mark Dixon has bought £5.5m-worth of shares – showing faith in the “long-term structural growth drivers” of the market.

SOURCE: INVESTORS CHRONICLE

...and some to hold, avoid or sell

Costain Group

Investors Chronicle

After two profit warnings last year, the “hits keep coming” for the “smart” infrastructure construction group. Cash has halved, the dividend has been axed and costs are spiralling on the National Grid project. Sell. 38p.

Genel Energy

Investors Chronicle

This Kurdistan-focused oil and gas firm is cash positive and has held its dividend. But oil price weakness, sliding production, falling demand and oversupply are “major headwinds”. Don't wait for the June dividend. Sell. 81.9p.

Intu Properties

The Times

About 80% of Intu's £2bn property portfolio is in retail, including large centres such as Lakeside in Essex and Manchester's Trafford Centre. Loss-making, with £4.5bn of debts – “clearly in a parlous state”. Avoid. 3.75p.

JD Wetherspoon

Investors Chronicle

The pub group has scrapped its dividend and delayed capital projects to conserve liquidity. Sales and margins were rising before 8 March, and CEO Tim Martin is likely to lobby for further government support. Hold. 700p.

Marks & Spencer Group

Investors Chronicle

Strong trading in the food business should continue, but the ailing clothing and home business is vulnerable to slack demand. Despite cutting the dividend and reducing capex from £400m to £80m, M&S can ill afford a hit. Sell. 115p.

SSP Group

The Times

SSP's food and drink outlets at airports and stations were trading “extremely well”. The damage from lockdown has been “eye-watering”, with revenues down 85%, but a lending facility has provided a lifeline. Hold. 290p.

Form guide

Shares tipped 12 weeks ago

Best tip
Learning Technologies Group
The Sunday Times
up 5.48% to 128.68p

Worst tip
Bellway
The Mail on Sunday
down 46.96% to £20.32

Market view

“The way we put it is: it's too late to sell and too early to buy... I'm pretty sceptical of the current bounceback.”

Kasper Elmgreen of Amundi. Quoted in the FT

Market summary

Key numbers for investors

	31 Mar 2020	Week before	Change (%)
FTSE 100	5671.96	5446.01	4.15%
FTSE All-share UK	3107.42	2969.58	4.64%
Dow Jones	22421.62	20246.59	10.74%
NASDAQ	7827.45	7323.07	6.89%
Nikkei 225	18917.01	18092.35	4.56%
Hang Seng	23603.48	22663.49	4.15%
Gold	1618.30	1525.40	6.09%
Brent Crude Oil	26.37	27.34	-3.55%
DIVIDEND YIELD (FTSE 100)	5.20%	6.26%	
UK 10-year gilts yield	0.35	0.47	
US 10-year Treasuries	0.69	0.88	
UK ECONOMIC DATA			
Latest CPI (yoy)	1.7% (Feb)	1.8% (Jan)	
Latest RPI (yoy)	2.5% (Feb)	2.7% (Jan)	
Halifax house price (yoy)	+2.8% (Feb)	+4.1% (Jan)	
£1 STERLING	\$1.215	€1.111	¥130.834

Best and worst performing shares

WEEK'S CHANGE, FTSE 100 STOCKS

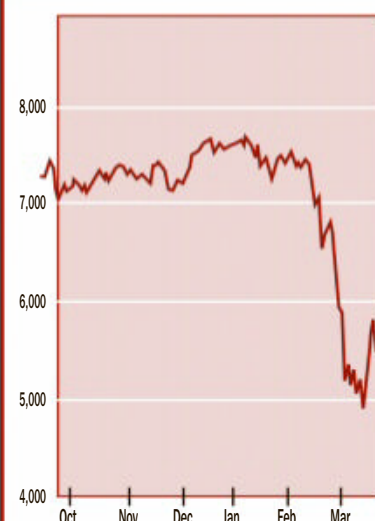
RISES	Price	% change
Smiths Group	1226.00	+20.61
Legal & General	193.85	+19.99
Compass Group	1264.00	+19.25
Bunzl	1629.50	+15.57
Icfl. Htts. Gp.	3515.50	+15.26
FALLS		
M&G	112.60	-18.99
HSBC Holdings	454.25	-11.80
Melrose Industries	91.50	-11.47
BT Group	117.90	-11.23
Centrica	38.08	-9.16

BEST AND WORST UK STOCKS OVERALL

Genedrive	28.00	+211.11
Hydrodec Group	2.25	-47.06

Source: Refinitiv (not adjusted for dividends). Prices on 31 Mar (pm)

Following the Footsie



6-month movement in the FTSE 100 index

The Millennium Dome: was it really so bad?

Even before it opened, it had become a byword for failure and New Labour hubris. But two decades on, it could be time for a reassessment, says Imogen West-Knights

As the millennium dawned, the Pacific islanders of Kiribati became the first people on Earth to ring in the year 2000. On the other side of the planet, final preparations were under way for the opening ceremony of the Millennium Dome. This was the night when 10,000 specially invited guests would finally see what was inside the big white tent in southeast London that had been the subject of such scrutiny for the previous four years. It had to be perfect.



"The £758m disaster zone" on the Greenwich peninsula

By 7pm in Greenwich, it was apparent there was a problem. A logistical cock-up meant hundreds of guests had not received their tickets through the post. Ticketless guests had been instructed to pick them up on New Year's Eve at Stratford station, before hopping on the newly completed Jubilee line to the Dome for the festivities. But on the night, body scanners installed by police at Stratford weren't working and, before long, several hundred people were stuck in the station. When the prime minister, Tony Blair, arrived two hours later, angry invitees, including many newspaper editors, were still no closer to boarding a train to Greenwich.

There was more trouble to come.

Just before 10pm, Jennie Page, the Dome's CEO, heard that police had received a call telling them there was a bomb in the Blackwall Tunnel, which ran beneath the Dome. The PM had been informed, as had the Queen, who was in attendance to receive a specially commissioned honour. In the minutes that followed, an ashen-faced Blair, as well as the police and Page, had to decide whether to cancel the UK's millennium celebration, the culmination of many years' work and £750m of investment. They carried on. The call turned out to be a hoax, and the stranded guests at Stratford eventually made it for the countdown, despite missing the festivities beforehand. After four years of politicians and press forecasting the project's failure, by the time midnight struck, it seemed the people behind the Dome had pulled it off.

The headlines told a different story. "The Black Hole of Stratford East" read one. "The £758m disaster zone" said another. Michael Heseltine, who sat on the Millennium Commission, which had brought the Dome to life, blames the standstill at Stratford. "It was a PR disaster," he recalled. "A lot of those who didn't get there on time were the very people who were going to report the event." But for the thousands involved in putting on the Millennium Experience, from government ministers to service staff, the worst was yet to come. For the duration of the year that the Dome was open, it was perceived as a catastrophe. Richard Rogers, one of the architects, said in 2015 that it "couldn't have

had a worse reception". Twenty years later, it is still a byword for New Labour hubris. But looking back, it is clear the prevailing narrative that the Dome was a total failure is not the full story.

When we met recently, Page spoke of her time on the Dome with dignity. "There are a lot of things I will not talk about," she said. In 1995, she became head of the Millennium Commission, responsible for deciding on a once-in-a-lifetime exhibition to mark the new millennium.

In February 1996,

Greenwich was chosen as the site, but it would be years before it was decided what form the exhibition itself would take. At that point, the commission's most urgent task was coming up with the structure to house it.

Mike Davies, who became the Dome's lead architect, knew that work would need to start as soon as possible – four years is not long for big projects. One thing was clear: whatever else they did, the site was going to need shelter. "In March, we were on the

site, and it was minus four," he told me. Standing there in the bitter wind, he had his eureka moment: "Let's do a mega cover." Davies, who always dresses head to toe in red, is still clearly infatuated with the

Dome's design. For two hours, he told me how it embodied the concept of time. "Twelve months of the year, so 12 masts, 365 metres in diameter, and with 24 scallops, like 24 hours in a day," he enthused. The concept fitted the bill, and was cheap at £42m.

Over Christmas 1996, Page and her team settled on a budget for the whole Millennium Experience: £750m, pieced together from sponsorship, National Lottery money and ticket revenue from 12 million visitors. But Labour's landslide victory at the May 1997 election, ending 18 years of Tory rule, raised concerns the project might be axed. As Page's team put their plan to the new Government, they emphasised its New Labour-friendly aims. The Dome would, among other things, "enhance the world's view of the Nation". Despite misgivings about the cost, scale and location, on 19 June, Blair announced that Labour was on board.

The next pressing question for the organisers was: what was the Dome actually going to be? There were nine ideas for "zones" – body, mind, spirit, work, rest, play, local, national, global – but beyond that, not much. Only now, two years into the project, was serious thought devoted to the contents of this exhibition, already being billed by the government as "the biggest, most thrilling, most entertaining, most thought-provoking experience anywhere

on the planet”. Under the supervision of Peter Mandelson, the New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC), as the Dome company had been renamed, gave designers a brief that consisted mostly of open-ended questions. For the body zone, they included “Are we what we eat?” and “What about designer people?”

Soon there were 14 zones, each designed by a different company – in addition to a spectacular performance involving 100 aerial gymnasts to take place in the central space. To give the experience coherence, design consultant Stephen Bayley was drafted in – but six months later, he left again, after his proposals were deemed too highbrow. “He was so the wrong person,” one insider told me. “He sat in one of our meetings reading Proust.” Eventually, Page’s team came up with something called the Litmus Group to oversee content, composed of cultural luminaries such as Alan Yentob and Michael Grade. Meanwhile, Mandelson sought inspiration at Disney World, in Florida, where he tried to avoid being photographed in the same frame as Mickey Mouse.

Prototypes of six zones were unveiled at a launch on London’s South Bank in February 1998. “This is a chance to demonstrate that Britain will be a breeding ground for the most successful businesses of the 21st century,” Blair told the audience. But the launch did not go down well. Everybody found their own problem with it: it was too political, insufficiently historical, too populist, a scandalous waste of money. Since it was a government project, tight controls were kept on what those involved could say. Everyone was briefed on the “line to take” (LTT). It consisted of four central messages: “It’s the people’s show. It’s the most exciting experience of the millennium. It’s good for Britain. It’s going well.”

In June 1998, the final piece of fabric went up on the Dome’s ten-hectare roof, and those involved stood awestruck beneath its complete canopy for the first time. The Dome is huge; weather systems would form inside if it weren’t for its Teflon roof. Beneath that roof, however, all was not well. Political advisers clashed with zone designers, as they attempted to ensure the content sent the right messages about Blair’s Britain. Pleasing sponsors was of paramount importance. But what designers, politicians and sponsors all wanted was often incompatible. The play zone was initially paired with Sky. “It was hopeless,” one designer told me. “They said to us, in a very aggressive way, the future of play is about digital television, because that’s what they were launching.” Zaha Hadid’s mind zone was sponsored by arms companies Marconi and BAE Systems. Six months before the opening, details of all 14 zones were finally made public. The money zone invited guests to “go on a million-pound spending spree” with virtual cash. The body zone would allow visitors to walk inside a human body, complete with animatronic pubic lice. No zone caused more controversy than the faith zone, whose non-denominational design met with outcry from religious leaders worried that the Dome’s commercialised environment would make a mockery of religion itself. “Is Rupert Murdoch’s name going to appear on the manger at Bethlehem?” asked the Bishop of Woolwich.

Final preparations were chaotic. A few weeks before the opening, Tim Pyne was working on the world’s largest billboard – a photograph of Richmond Park, as wide as a Boeing 747, for the learning zone. It was being printed at a special facility in Iceland because of its huge scale. The printers called to ask whether the naked man in the woods, visible in the full-size photograph, was a deliberate inclusion. Pyne had to make clear it was not, and that the whole



Blair with Gerbeau: some Disney nous for the Dome

billboard would need to be reprinted. What was the mood like in those weeks? “I think I probably had a breakdown,” said Pyne.

Some remember enjoying the exhibition, when it threw open its doors to the public on 1 January 2000. But turnout was low. In its first month, the Dome welcomed fewer than half the visitors needed to break even. Page was asked to resign – unfairly, according to many. By aiming for 12 million visitors, the company behind the Dome had created impossible criteria – the combined number of tickets sold for Alton Towers, Madame Tussauds and the London Eye in 2000 was eight million.

After Page’s resignation, the man hired to limit damage was P.Y. Gerbeau, an infectious optimist ex-Euro Disney executive whom newspapers nicknamed “the Gerbil”. He reduced prices, and brought in a funfair to sell tickets. But one set of visitors the Dome could have done without was a gang of would-be thieves, who in November drove a JCB digger into the side of the building in a failed attempt to steal the Millennium Star, a large gemstone that diamond company De Beers had contributed to the money zone. The Dome closed, with little fanfare, on 31 December. Months earlier, Blair had admitted on BBC1’s *Breakfast with Frost* that: “If I’d known then what I know now about governments trying to run a visitor attraction – it was too ambitious.”

The Dome lay empty, a ruin before its time, for 18 months while the government struggled to find it a future – until, in May 2002, the US entertainment company AEG stepped in to purchase the building. The deal was that AEG would invest many millions into redeveloping the site as a music venue, later to be named the O2 Arena, and give the government 15% of its profits. The site itself was sold for £1. The O2 Arena opened in 2007, and has been the world’s most popular music venue ever since. Mike Davies’s versatile building adapted well to its new purposes. Apart from the 20,000-seat music and sports venue, the Dome now houses a shopping centre, a trampoline park and a bowling alley. The O2’s popularity is the thing those involved in the Millennium Experience are most keen to emphasise. It’s a “brilliant success”, Mandelson told me a number of times. But the Dome also gave some badly needed new life to the Greenwich peninsula, which had been empty of buildings and covered with toxic soil from a defunct gasworks. Today, the land is detoxified, luxury flats are being built – and though unemployment remains high, jobs have been created for local people.

These days, the Dome is remembered as a white elephant. But polls at the time showed that as many as 90% of the six million visitors enjoyed themselves – children in particular loved it. Its creators set out to provide an experience that would unite the country. In a way, they succeeded. There is something typically British in our collective enthusiasm for enshrining the memory of the Dome as being a bit shit – be that memory accurate or not. It may well be that this same sort of national unity in disdain will repeat itself in the near future. In 2018, Theresa May announced plans for a £120m “Festival of Brexit Britain” – showcasing the UK’s talent in “business, technology, arts and sport” in 2022. Planning is going ahead, and the festival’s head, Martin Green, expects to announce a programme by the end of 2021. “Oh for God’s sake,” said Heseltine, rolling his eyes when I mentioned the festival. “Put it in Dover and everyone can go before they leave.”

A longer version of this article appeared in *The Guardian*.
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A horrible history of ancient plagues

Two of the great civilisations of the classical world were brought to their knees by foreign pathogens, writes Tom Holland

At times of great crisis, it is natural to look to the past for precedents. Boris Johnson, to a degree unusual among today's politicians, has a frame of reference that reaches back beyond Sars, the Spanish flu, even the Black Death. In the warm afterglow of his general election victory, he doubtless had fond dreams of ushering Britain into a golden age. His great hero Pericles (below), an aristocratic Athenian with an exotic sex life and a genius for getting the working man to vote for him, provided the obvious role model. It was under Pericles that Athens built the Parthenon, fought the Spartans and fashioned an empire. Yet in the end, everything he had laboured to achieve came crashing down. Athens was overwhelmed by a plague that wiped out a third of its population – up to 100,000 people – and Pericles himself.



Michael Sweerts' Plague in an Ancient City (c.1650): a terrible reaping

The various waves of infectious disease that struck the classical world are the stuff of dystopian science fiction, closer to *28 Days Later* than our experience of Covid-19. To that degree, they provide comfort, in our current dark days, that humanity has suffered worse and survived. The story is not, however, entirely a reassuring one. The plague that killed Pericles came to Athens along its shipping lanes. For months, rumours had circulated of the devastation it had brought to distant lands: Ethiopia, Egypt, Persia. Unsurprisingly, when it arrived in 430BC, the first cases were in the harbour. It did not take long, however, for it to engulf the city. Doctors found themselves helpless. "Indeed," the historian Thucydides wrote, "they were the ones who suffered the highest mortality rate of all." It is hard to believe the awareness of this does not sometimes fall like a shadow across the PM's thoughts.

The plague of Athens served as the very archetype of an epidemic. Then as now, germs tend to go wherever goods go. Athens, the centre of a great empire, its harbours packed with ships from across the Greek and Persian worlds, was an early exemplar of globalisation. Its wealth provided a dazzling illustration of the potential rewards. But the immolation of its citizens by disease, "the swooping-down of the fever-god", as Sophocles put it, demonstrated as well just how lethal the costs might be. Sparta, the dour and xenophobic city that had already been at war with Athens for an entire year that summer of 430, provided a telling contrast. There may not have been an equivalent of the Parthenon in Sparta, but neither was there any plague. And in the end, it was the Spartans who won the war.

Thucydides, whose account of the suffering of those who contracted the plague – fever, sores, dementia, blindness – was founded on personal observation, also analysed with the eye of a pathologist the symptoms displayed by the city as a whole. The plague, by disrupting what Athenians regarded as normality, disrupted as well the bonds

holding society together. "It was to the plague that Athens owed its collapse into an unprecedented condition of lawlessness," he wrote.

Today's doctors may not have a vaccine with which to combat the coronavirus, but at least, unlike the doctors of Periclean Athens, they know what a vaccine is. Even though globalisation has caused Covid-19 to spread around the world at great speed, it has also – by increasing wealth and therefore health – made most of us better able to withstand its onset. In antiquity, by contrast,

globalisation was invariably calamitous for health – something even more evident from the history of the Roman world. Cities such as Rome and Alexandria at that time did not just teem with people drawn from across the Mediterranean, but stood at the intersection of two of the most toxic cradles of pathogens: central Africa and central Asia. Sure enough, in the third century AD, a plague that seems likely to have been caused by a virus akin to Ebola brought a great scythe to the empire. Bowels melted into a sludgy mess; blood oozed from the eyes; feet rotted away. Amid the carnage of this terrifying plague, the Roman world collapsed into anarchy.

"The wealth of Athens was dazzling. But the immolation of its citizens by disease showed the high costs of the city's sophistication"

Even though it managed to recover, the empire was profoundly altered. By the sixth century, when *Yersinia pestis*, a bacterium originally from

China, brought the experience of epidemic again to the Roman world, Rome itself had been left a shell, and the new capital, Constantinople, ruled an empire halved in size. Once more there was a terrible reaping. So many corpses came to litter the city that the emperor felt obliged to have them dumped in the sea. Then, as the waters of the harbour turned into a soup of decomposing flesh, he ordered vast pits dug beyond the city walls. Within these, rows of bodies were laid and "trodden upon by feet and trampled like spoilt grapes". As in Athens, so now in Constantinople: a great imperial crossroads had fallen victim to its own success.

"Prudent men are wont to say," Machiavelli once declared, "that he who would foresee what has to be should reflect on what has been, for everything that happens in the world at any time has a genuine resemblance to what happened in ancient times." This is a reflection that is likely to seem, in the 21st century, far more implausible than it ever did in Machiavelli's day.

Covid-19 has nothing on the horrors of ancient plagues.

We are equipped to fight epidemics in ways beyond the dreams of any Athenian or Roman. Our civilisation is not melting like a sandcastle before repeated waves of disease. Covid-19 will pass, and most of us will pull through. And yet even today, the ancient past holds up an unsettling mirror, showing how great empires were laid low by foreign pathogens.

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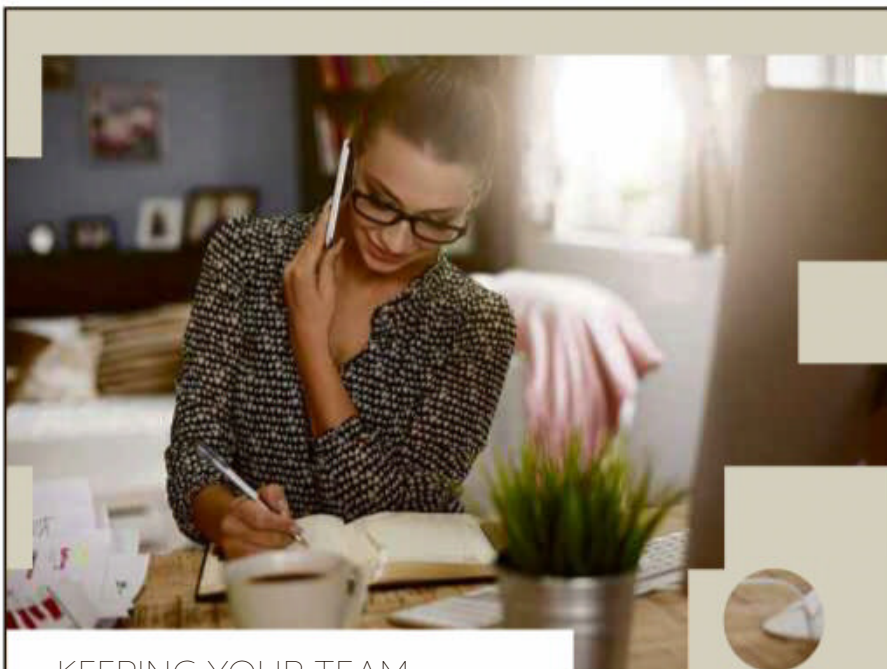
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THE WEEK CROSSWORD 1203

An **Ettinger travel pass case** and two **Connell Guides** will be given to the sender of the first correct solution to the crossword and the clue of the week opened on Monday 13 April. Email the answers, either as a scan of a completed grid or a list of answers, to crossword@theweek.co.uk. **Tim Moorey** (timmoorey.info)



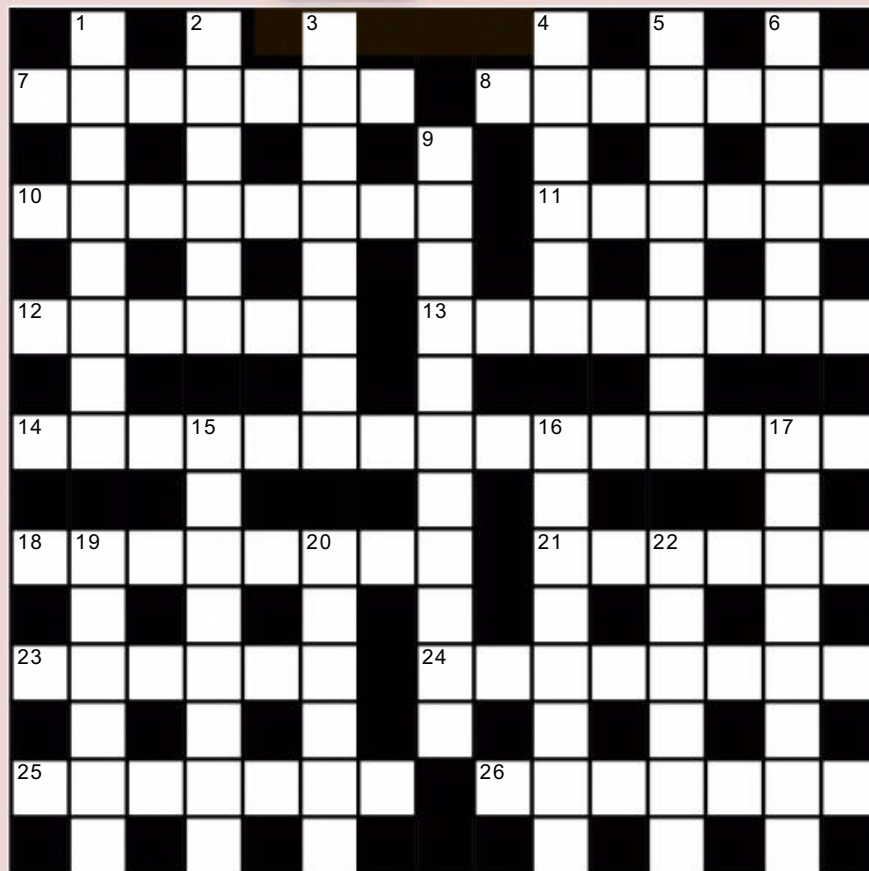
This week's winner will receive an Ettinger (ettinger.co.uk) travel pass case (assorted colours), which retails at £105, and two Connell Guides (connellguides.com).

ACROSS

- 7 Now that could be something! (7)
8 Caught one on the way out with a chopper (7)
10 Storming rant, officials backed – give over! (8)
11 Obsessive rear admiral seen in one, right? (6)
12 Sound is mostly very slow in music (6)
13 Asteroids could produce this, nothing less (8)
14 Gifts I'll reckon to get sorted before end of Xmas! (8,7)
18 Plaice seen without tails at sea? Not commonplace! (8)
21 Cook batting after introduction of off-spinner Root (6)
23 Illegal activity in group together British rejected (6)
24 Intermittently switch positions (2,3,3)
25 Sounds like they have trouble in their... chests? Chests (7)
26 English in eastern island resort is the language (7)

DOWN

- 1 Clamour about district getting cut and cut (5-3)
2 Sunday Times briefly put over a new church position (6)
3 Scraps in the shower after match (8)
4 Tucks in place with food (6)
5 Musical girl keeps employment (8)
6 Entertain royal with butt of wine (6)
9 One returning for archaeological work further north (8,3)
15 Heard Russian dramatist? Tick list (5,3)
16 Besotted admirer gives marriage promise after a time! (8)
17 What starts to ruin awayday during autumn? (8)
19 Salt in the main goes with chow perhaps (3,3)
20 Detain working student (6)
22 I like nothing about new colour (6)



Name

Address

Tel no

Clue of the week answer:

Clue of the week: Butcher has ox tongue (5, last letter A) from *A Week in December*, a novel by Sebastian Faulks

Solution to Crossword 1201

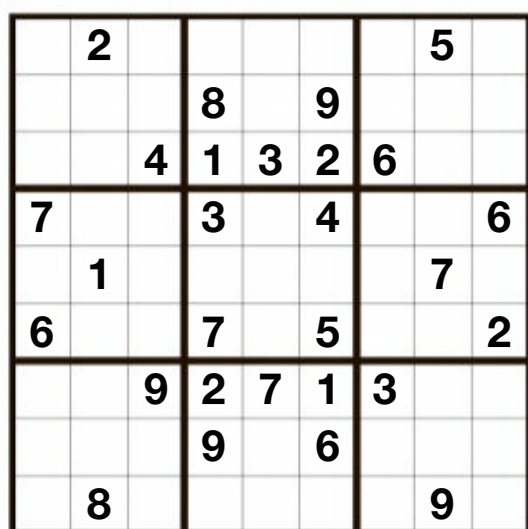
ACROSS: 1 Scarecrow 9 Adamant 10 Snubbed 11 Granite 12 Piecemeal 14 Beta test 15 Townie 17 Marshal 20 Peking 23 Carolina 25 Olfactory 26 Salerno 27 Pesetas 28 Eternal 29 Ecstasies

DOWN: 2 Centimo 3 Rubicon 4 Cream tea 5 Wangle 6 Palatable 7 Cabinet 8 Attesting 13 Abysmal 15 Towcester 16 Imploring 18 Apparent 19 Trolley 21 Kittens 22 Narrate 24 Noodle

Clue of the week: The scandal of fees charged in this capital market? (12 first letters BI) **Solution:** Billingsgate

The winner of 1201 is Rhys Barnett from London

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Sudoku 747 (difficult)

Fill in all the squares so that each row, column and each of the 3x3 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9

Solution to Sudoku 746

3	2	1	4	6	9	8	7	5
6	4	9	5	7	8	3	1	2
5	8	7	3	2	1	9	6	4
9	7	4	6	5	3	1	2	8
1	5	6	8	9	2	7	4	3
2	3	8	1	4	7	5	9	6
8	6	3	9	1	4	2	5	7
4	1	2	7	3	5	6	8	9
7	9	5	2	8	6	4	3	1

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